

DE GRUYTER

*Albrecht Classen (Ed.)*

# TRAVEL, TIME, AND SPACE IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND EARLY MODERN TIME

EXPLORATIONS OF WORLD PERCEPTIONS  
AND PROCESSES OF IDENTITY FORMATION



FUNDAMENTALS OF MEDIEVAL  
AND EARLY MODERN CULTURE



## **Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time**

# **Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture**

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Edited by  
Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge

## **Volume 22**

# **Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time**



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# Author Biography

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**Inneke Baatsen** is research officer at the Urban Studies Institute of the University of Antwerp. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of Antwerp in 2016 with a study on the material culture of cooking and dining in late medieval and early modern Bruges (“A Bittersweet Symphony: The Social Recipe of Dining Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Bruges [1438–1600]). She is currently revising her thesis for publication, but has already published extensively on late medieval kitchens and dining experiences.

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**Chiara Benati** is Associate Professor of Germanic Philology at the University of Genoa, Italy. She has published, among others, essays on the Middle Low German influence of the phraseology of the oldest Swedish written sources (*L’influsso bassotedesco sulla fraseologia dello svedese tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna*, 2006), on the Middle High German *Dietrich* epic and its reception in Scandinavia (*Laurin e Walberan: Introduzione, traduzione dall’altotedesco medio e commento*, 2007). Her current research interests include Middle High German literature, Middle Low German–Scandinavian language contact, Faroese language and literature, as well as earliest (Low) German surgical treatises and their specialized terminology. This analysis of German vernacular surgical sources has not only resulted in various publications (*Dat Boek der Wundenartzstedye und der niederdeutsche chirurgische Fachwortschatz*, 2012; “The Manuscript Version of Hans von Gersdorff’s *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney* in Copenhagen GKS 1663 4o and its Relation to the Printed Tradition,” 2013; “Surgeon or Lexicographer? The Latin-German Glossaries in Addendum to Hans von Gersdorff’s *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*,” 2013; “Zur Überlieferung von Hans von Gersdorffs *Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*: Die

Handschrift Kopenhagen GKS 1663 4to und ihr Verhältnis zu den Druckfassungen,” 2014; *Die niederdeutsche Fassung des Feldtbuchs der Wundarzney in Kopenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 1663 4<sup>o</sup>. Edition und Kommentar*, 2017; *Dat kinder bock: a Low German pediatric medical book in Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 1663 4to*, 2017; *The Field Surgery Manual Which Became a Medical Commonplace Book: Hans von Gersdorff's Feldtbuch der Wundarzney*, 2017), but also in the interest for charms and blessings, which are often included in medical compendia (“Eine neue niederdeutsche Fassung des Longinussegens zur Blutstillung,” 2016; “Charms and blessings in the Middle Low German medical tradition,” 2017; “À la guerre comme à la guerre but with caution: Protection charms and blessings in the Germanic tradition,” 2017; “Painted Eyes, Magical Sieves and Carved Runes: Charms for Catching and Punishing Thieves in Medieval and Early Modern Germanic Tradition,” 2017).

**Albrecht Classen** is University Distinguished Professor of German Studies at The University of Arizona. He has published more than seventy books, most recently *The Medieval Chastity Belt: A Myth-Making Process* (2007), *The Power of a Woman's Voice* (2007); the English translation of the poems by Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445) (2008); a book on Sixteenth-Century German Jest Narratives (*Deutsche Schwankliteratur*, 2009); *Lied und Liederbuch in der Frühen Neuzeit*, together with Lukas Richter, 2009, and *Tiere als Freunde im Mittelalter*, together with Gabriela Kompatscher and Peter Dinzelbacher (2010). In 2011 he published *Sex im Mittelalter*. Among the volumes that he has edited recently are *Words of Love and Love of Words in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (2008), *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time* (2008), *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time* (2009), *War and Peace* (2011), and *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time* (2012). A three-volume *Handbook of Medieval Studies* (with Walter de Gruyter) appeared in 2010 (award of the “Outstanding Academic Title” by Choice). His latest books dealt with the history of German-speaking Jesuit missionaries in eighteenth-century Sonora, *The Letters of the Swiss Jesuit Missionary Philipp Segesser (1689–1762)*, and *Early History of the Southwest Through the Eyes of German-Speaking Jesuit Missionaries* (both 2012). He published his *Handbook of Medieval Culture* (3 vols.) in 2015, and his latest monographs on *The Forest in Medieval German Literature* (2015) and on *Water in Medieval Literature* (2017) pursue ecocritical perspectives. In 2008 the University of Arizona bestowed upon him its highest award for research, the “Henry & Phyllis Koffler Award.” In 2004 the German government awarded him with the *Bundesverdienstkreuz am Band* (Order of Merit), its highest civilian award. He has also received numerous teaching and service awards over the last two decades, most recently the “Five Star Faculty Award” (2009) and the “Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 2012 Arizona Professor of the Year Award.” He is serving as editor of the journals *Mediaevistik* and *Humanities—Open Access, Online*. For many years, he has been the president of the Arizona chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German, and recently completed his function as President/Past President of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association for the third time, only to resume this again in 2015. The RMLA awarded him with its Sterling Membership Award in 2013. In 2015 he received the Excellence in Academic Advising Faculty Advisor Award, followed by a Certificate of Merit from NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. In 2016, friends and colleagues dedicated a *Festschrift* (*Mediaevistik* 28) to him on the occasion of his 60th birthday. His latest books are an English translation of Rudolf von Ems's *Der guote Gerhart* (2016), an edited volume on multilingualism in the Middle Ages (2016), and a new monograph, *History of Tolerance and Toleration in Medieval and Early Modern Literature* (2018). In recognition of his accomplishments, he received the rank of Grand Knight Commander of the Most Noble Order of the Three Lions in 2017.



**Allison P. Coudert** received her PhD from the Warburg Institute, University of London in 1972. From 1996 to 2004 she taught at Arizona State University, and since then at the University of California, Davis. She holds the Castelfranco Endowed Chair in the History of Christianity. Her focus of interest is on the interaction between religion and science in the West, with a special emphasis on Jewish contributions to science and on women and gender issues. Her most recent book *Religion, Magic, and Science in Early Modern Europe and America* was published by Praeger in October, 2011. Her published work also includes *Leibniz and the Kabbalah* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995) and *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the 17th Century: The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury van Helmont, 1614–1698* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999). She has regularly contributed to the volumes in the series “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture.”

**Gavin Fort** received his Ph.D. in 2017 from Northwestern University in medieval history with a dissertation on “The Vicarious Middle Ages: Proxy Penance in Medieval Europe, 200–1550.” He has published articles on penance in *Church History* (“Penitents and Their Proxies: Penance for Others in Early Medieval Europe”) and the *Journal of Medieval History* (“Suffering Another’s Sin: Proxy Penance in the Thirteenth Century”). He is currently finishing a book manuscript on the history of proxy penance from the early church to the Reformation. More broadly, his research focuses on the way emotions like empathy and nostalgia influenced medieval religious culture.

**Aaron French** is a Ph.D. Candidate in The Study of Religion at UC Davis. He received a B.A. in Religious Studies from the University of Arizona in 2015. His general area of interest is the history of science and esotericism during the 19th century in Central Europe, particularly Germany. His research focuses on how cultural and epistemological boundaries separating different types of knowledge—such as science, religion, and esotericism (broadly speaking)—were constructed during the period referred to as “modernity” in European intellectual history. The working title of his dissertation is Rudolf Steiner and Max Weber: Esotericism, Science, and “the East” in Modern Germany.

**Michael Fulton** earned a B.A. in Spanish at Washington State University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Arizona, where his doctoral dissertation focused on the inquisitorial trial of one of Spain’s most notable Renaissance poets, Fray Luis de León (1527–1591). He is Full Professor at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and has taught a variety of courses, from introductory language to upper-division literature and culture courses, and courses in Spanish for the Professions. His research, however, continues to focus on Fray Luis’s trial. In the last few years, he has been examining the trial in light of psychological studies on social isolation and physical confinement. His most recent publications include an article in *eHumanista* describing how writing *De los nombres de Cristo* in prison would have helped Fray Luis endure the stress of the trial, and an article in *LEMIR* arguing that Fray Luis strategically altered his rhetorical style in works published after his release.

**Nurit Golan** is currently affiliated with the Cohn Institute for the Study of Philosophy, History and Sociology of Science at Tel Aviv University, Israel. After graduating from Comparative Literature at Tel Aviv University, Nurit taught literature at the Open University, was a research fellow at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem and at the School of Education at Tel Aviv University where she published several papers and teachers’ guidebooks. Nurit was also a co-editor of the *Film Magazine* of the Israeli Film Institute. She translated several novels for young readers, from German, English, and Norwegian into Hebrew. Twelve years ago Nurit began studying art history as well as philosophy and history of the sciences at Tel Aviv University. She wrote her Master thesis on the Norman mosaics of Sicily and published a paper “The Old Testaments

Mosaics in Sta. Maria Nova Cathedral, Monreale, Sicily: The Political Ideology of King William II” in *The Bible in the Arts*, Motar, 15 (2007) (in Hebrew). She did her Ph.D. research on the Creation Sculptures in the Upper-Rhine Churches in the fourteenth century. She received her Ph.D. in August of 2015. Since then, Nurit published a paper about the Creation sculptures at Freiburg in the volume *Death and the Culture of Death* (2016) edited by Professor Classen. Focusing her research on the material and visual history of science, she next published a paper on the connection between magic and science as expressed in the *Portail des Libraires*, Rouen in the volume *Magic and Magicians* (2017) also edited by Professor Classen. Another paper of hers regarding Schwäbisch Gmünd was published by *Nuncius* in 2018. She is currently working on turning her dissertation into a book.

**Jiří Koten** graduated from History of Czech Literature and Literary Theory at the Faculty of Arts at the Charles University in Prague (Ph.D. in 2009). He is currently the head of the Department of Czech and Slavonic Studies at the Faculty of Education at the University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem. He also works in the Department of Theory at the Institute of Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Science. A particular subject of his interest is literary theory, especially fiction theory and diachronic narratology. Primarily he is focusing on historical poetics of narration, developmental changes of narrative forms and profiles of fictional worlds typical for literature of various historical periods. He has published numerous studies and essays in professional journals and collective monographs. In 2013 he published his own monograph, *Jak se fikce dělá slovy* (*How To Do Fictions With Words*). Currently he is participating in the preparation of *Slovník literárněvědného strukturalismu* (*A Dictionary of Literary Structuralism*), to which he has contributed with keywords from the field of narratology as well as keywords about the Bakhtin Circle and the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School. He is currently preparing a monograph about developmental tendencies in Czech narration from the early modern period to the end of the nineteenth century.

**María Dolores Morillo López** received her Ph.D. from Columbia University, New York, in 2008 with a dissertation entitled “Anomalías dramáticas en el teatro de Miguel de Cervantes.” She is currently Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures at California State University, Fresno. She specializes in Early Modern Spanish drama, with an emphasis on Miguel de Cervantes’s interludes and plays. Prof. Morillo López has published several articles on Cervantes’s and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’ interludes in *Anuario de Estudios Cervantinos*, *Theatralia*, and *Cuadernos Cervantes*. She is currently working on a project about traveling women and *pícaras* (female rogues) in early modern Spain’s picaresque novels and novellas.

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**Lia B. Ross** holds a Ph.D. in European History (Medieval & Early Modern) from the University of New Mexico where she worked full-time as computer analyst and part-time history instructor until her retirement in 2013. She has specialized in cultural studies of fifteenth-century France, Burgundy, and England and is still an active member of the *Centre européen d'études bourguignonnes* (CEEB). After her book *Revisiting Decadence: a Behavioral Interpretation of Fifteenth-Century Historical Narrative* (2010), she has contributed to several volumes in the series "Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture," edited by Albrecht Classen, and to annual publications of the CEEB.

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**Lisa M. C. Weston**, California State University, Fresno, is Professor of English and currently Chair of the Department. She has written and presented variously on Anglo-Saxon charms and on the literary culture of monastic women, as well as the involvement of gender and sexuality

with practices of early medieval literacy. Her publications include the essay collection *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England* (2004; co-edited with Carol Pasternak); chapters on “Virginity and Other Sexualities” in *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim* (2013) and “Saintly Lives: Friendship, Kinship, Gender and Sexuality” in *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature* (2013); and, most recently, “Guthlac Betwixt and Between: Literacy, Cross-temporal Affiliation, and an Anglo-Saxon Anchorite” in the January 2016 issue of the *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*. She also contributed an article on Chaucer’s *Prioress’s Tale*, “Suffer the Little Children, or, A Rumination on the Faith of Zombies,” to *Dark Chaucer: An Assortment* (2012), and the more speculative “‘Tis Magick, Magick That Will Have Ravished Me” to *Burn After Reading: Miniature Manifestos for a Postmedieval Studies* (2014).

**Thomas Willard** is Professor of English and Religious Studies at the University of Arizona, in Tucson. He has published essays on the relation of literature and ideas, primarily in the late medieval and early modern periods, along with an edition of the alchemical writings of Jean d’Espagne (New York and London 1999). His occasional essays on aspects of Rosicrucianism have appeared in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* (1984), *Theorien vom Ursprung der Sprache* (1989), *Secret Texts: The Literature of Secret Societies* (1995), and *Mystical Metal of Gold: Essays on Alchemy and Renaissance Culture* (2007). He has also published essays on twentieth-century literature and on the literary theory of his former teacher Northrop Frye, and has contributed a number of times to two book series edited by Albrecht Classen: “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture” and “Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien.” Recently he published “Dreams and Symbols in *The Chemical Wedding*,” in *Lux in Tenebris: The Visual and the Symbolic in Western Esotericism*, ed. by Peter J. Forshaw (2017).



Albrecht Classen

# Time, Space, and Travel in the Pre-Modern World: Theoretical and Historical Reflections. An Introduction

We are all familiar with this curious, universal, and timeless phenomenon involved in traveling, or moving around, visiting other places and people, going on journeys, or exploring spaces. In all likelihood, we today share this with the experiences which people in the past also went through since departing from home has always been associated with anxiety, uncertainty, excitement, hopes, fears, efforts, relief from boredom, and worries. The person who leaves home to go abroad, for instance, might return the same individual in body, but certainly not the same one in mind or spirit. Being forced into exile has always been regarded with great trepidation and anxiety, as it has been a form of forced travel, removing an individual from his/her home to a distant location. Travel by itself is neither positive nor negative, but it can mean both, excitement, innovation, renewal, exploration, or loss, hopelessness, disappearance, and loneliness.<sup>1</sup> If an individual is forced to travel, such as in the case of migrants or asylum seekers, the negatives tend to dominate, but those who travel in order to reach new shores are mostly inspired by optimism and high expectations.

The time spent away from home has always had a significant impact on the personal identity and belongs to some of the fundamental epistemological realizations pertaining to much of what we investigate in the broader field of the Humanities, both past and present, including the meaning of identity, personal growth, culture, and the encounter with the Other.<sup>2</sup> The move from one location to

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1 *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle. *Ancient Israel and Its Literature*, 10 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011); Albrecht Classen, "The Experience of Exile in Medieval German Heroic Poetry," *Medieval German Textrelations: Translations, Editions, and Studies (Kalamazoo Paper 2010–2011)*, ed. by Sibylle Jefferis. *Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik*, 765 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2012), 83–110; Julia Hillner, Jörg Ulrich, and Jakob Engberg, *Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity* (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2016). The experience of exile has not been limited to any culture, language, people, or religion. But each time, the individual had to go on an involuntary travel, this was mostly perceived as personal tragedy. However, some of the greatest literary works were the result of this experience.

2 See the contributions to *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (New York and London: Routledge, 2002); *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Trans-*

another constitutes one of the most fundamental and far-reaching experiences in all of human life. Childhood is focused on the self, a time of early growth, mostly at the same location, whereas adulthood represents the next stage in human level when we turn away from the self toward the outside, often foreign world and toward otherness, transforming ourselves in that process because we move away and explore new spaces, as James Clifford insightfully noted in his study on routes, travel and translations in the contemporary world.<sup>3</sup> We could thus identify travel as an icon of the changing stages in human life because we only come to a rest in our existence once we have finished with our last journey and do no longer grow, or travel. Indeed, as trite as it might sound, life is a journey, as the pre-modern world was only too aware of as well. Considering the vast numbers of pilgrims who crisscrossed medieval and early modern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean, searching for spiritual help and the salvation of their souls – here not taking into account the extensive amount of pilgrims in Hindu, Muslim, or Buddhist territories – it deserves to be noted that we in the twenty-first century might profit considerably from reflecting on this behavioral pattern as a meaningful way of life. We can, or should, understand ‘travel’ both in concrete physical terms and as a metaphor of all life, mirroring the constant transformations we are going through while growing up and living until we die. And even then, or maybe more importantly, most religions conceive of the time after death as the ultimate travel, either down to hell (*catabasis*), up to heaven, into Nirvana, or to some other dimension, which finds one of its best expressions in Dante Alighieri’s *Divina commedia* (ca. 1320), where the pilgrim traveler re-discovers both his own earthly existence and then the afterlife, moving from one circle to the next, traversing *inferno*, *purgatorio*, and *paradiso*, always accompanied by a competent

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*cultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 14 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013); see also the theoretical reflections in the contributions to *Das Fremde und das Eigene: Prolegomena zu einer interkulturellen Germanistik*, ed. Alois Wierlacher. *Publikationen der Gesellschaft für interkulturelle Germanistik*, I (Munich: iudicium, 1985); Marina Münkler, *Erfahrung des Fremden: Die Beschreibung Ostasiens in den Augenzeugenberichten des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000); cf. also John Tolan, Gilles Veinstein, and Henry Laurens, *Europe and the Islamic World: A History*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013); *Re-Imagining the Other: Culture, Media, and Western-Muslim Intersections*, ed. Mahmoud Eid and Karim H. Karim (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Richard B. Miller, *Friends and Other Strangers: Studies in Religion, Ethics, and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 34. He calls the entire phenomenon as studied by modern anthropologists and cultural historians, ‘nomadology’ (39). See also the contributions to *Border-Crossing; Phenomenology, Interculturality and Interdisciplinarity*, ed. Guoying Liu. *Orbis Phaenomenologicus / Perspektiven / Neue Folge*, 29 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2014).



guide who helps him to reach the next level of his quest. Dante's poetic genius thus also rests in operating both with real space and virtual space, taking the questing individual on the ultimately only meaningful journey from birth to death to the soul's salvation. Intriguingly, this *catabasis* finds many parallels in other cultures and religions all over the world and throughout time, such as in the Icelandic *Niðrstigningar saga* (ca. 1200–1220),<sup>4</sup> and thus the subsequent contributions will explore some of those global perspective as well (see especially the contribution by Romedio Schmitz-Esser).

Nevertheless, the experience of travel has always been historically and culturally determined, and irrespective of these initial philosophical reflections, every traveler throughout time has witnessed the world through unique lenses. Travel in Roman antiquity was different from travel in the European Middle Ages; and travelers from the Arabic-Muslim world witnessed the world differently than their Christian counterparts, both in the pre-modern and in the early modern world, for instance.<sup>5</sup> There are many peoples throughout the world whose lives

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<sup>4</sup> Roberto Mercuri, *Semantica di Gerione: il motivo del viaggio nella "Commedia" di Dante*. *Analisi letteraria*, 25 (Rome: Bulzoni, 1984); Raffaele Giglio, *Il volo di Ulisse e di Dante altri studi sulla Commedia*. 2nd rev. ed. *Ricerche di "Critica letteraria"*, 1 (Naples: Loffredo, 1997); Jacek Grzybowski, *Cosmological and Philosophical World of Dante Alighieri: The "Divine Comedy" as a Medieval Vision of the Universe*. *European Studies in Theology, Philosophy and History of Religions*, 9 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2015). For the actual travels that Dante undertook through Italy and Europe, see the contributions to *Il viaggio dell'esilio: itinerari, città e paesaggi danteschi*, ed. Attilio Brilli (Bologna: Minerva, 2015). As to the *Niðrstigningar saga*, see Odd Einar Haugen, "Nicodemus, Gospel of," *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano (New York and London: Garland, 1993), 430–32; Dario Bullitta, *Niðrstigningar saga: Sources, Transmission, and Theology of the Old Norse "Descent into Hell"*. *Toronto Old Norse and Icelandic Series*, 11 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017); for a thorough review, see Adam Oberlin, in *Mediævistik* 31 (forthcoming); Zbigniew Izydorczyk, "The *Evangelium Nicodemi* in the Middle Ages," *The Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus: Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts in Western Europe*, ed. id. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1997). As to the difference between *Realraum* and the 'virtual space,' see Elisabeth Tiller, "RaumErkundungen: Zur Einführung," *RaumErkundungen: Einblicke und Ausblicke*, ed. eadem and Christoph Oliver Mayer. *Beiträge zur neueren Literaturgeschichte*, 282 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011), 9–24; Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz, "Raum in der Renaissance," *ibid.*, 27–49. Cf. also the contributions to *Symbolik von Ort und Raum*, ed. Paul Michel. *Schriften zur Symbolforschung*, 11 (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 1997). As to travel through the underworld in Buddhist thought, see, for instance, Bryan J. Cuevas, *Travels in the Netherworld: Buddhist Popular Narratives of Death and the Afterlife in Tibet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, the monumental contributions to this large topic by Werner Paravicini produced over several decades; now somewhat summarized in his *Ehrenvolle Abwesenheit: Studien zum adligen Reisen im späten Mittelalter*, ed. Jan Hirschbiegel and Harm von Seggern (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2017). This *Festschrift* contains previous studies by Paravicini that

are predicated on constant travel (nomads), either forced to do so because of harsh natural conditions, or because this is simply their traditional way of life. Moreover, military, economic, religious, and social forces have constantly driven individuals and entire groups of people away from their homes. Consequently, studying the past without taking into consideration the hugely relevant component of travel would deprive us of a full comprehension and would leave us blind to central motivational factors in human existence – here disregarding the vast aspect of migrating animals and birds, although natural cycles have always involved movements from space to space.

The focus on travel does not involve necessarily long and extensive journeys to foreign countries, continents, cultures, or language areas. Instead, the issue to be examined here from a variety of perspectives relevant both for the Middle Ages and the early modern age pertains to the fundamental experience of leaving one's early existence behind and discovering one's own space, or simply places, all of which is universally predicated on difference and the formation of one's identity, as virtually all courtly romances and early modern novels reflect in one way or the other. To use some metaphors, this process involves the replacement of the mirror with the telescope or microscope, that is, the reversal of the perspective away from the self toward the other, discovering thereby the self reflected in the other. As Reinhold Münster now emphasizes,

Der Raum lässt sich nicht ohne die Bewegung erschließen, erfahren, wahrnehmen, errahnen, erräumen, phantasieren, deuten und verstehen; die Reise/Bewegung verlöre ohne Raum jeglichen Sinn. Menschen sind auf Sinn angewiesen, da nur die Sinngebung die Orientierung – Richtung des Gehens, der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung, der Transzendenz des Geistes – und die Standpunktbestimmung ermöglicht.<sup>6</sup>

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paradigmatically mirror the various significant approaches to the research topic of 'travel' in the late Middle Ages and the early modern age, here primarily focusing on travel by members of the social elites, either to the Purgatory of St. Patrick in Ireland or to Prussia, combined with fifteen studies of individual noble travelers from Alfonso Mudarra to King Christian of Denmark (all fifteenth century). As Paravicini rightly emphasizes, dismantling many modern myths about the actual travel conditions for those with the financial means and resources, the concept of the 'knight errant' roaming the world all by himself was only a literary projection: "Der wirkliche Edelmann wußte, wohin die Reise ging, und hatte sich ausgerüstet mit Dienerschaft, Pferd und Waffen, Kleidung, Geld und Proviant – vor allem aber mit Schriftstücken, die er für den guten Verlauf seiner Fahrt unbedingt brauchte" (145; The real nobleman knew the goal of the journey, and he was equipped with the servants, horse, weapons, clothing, money, and resources – especially, however, with [informative] narratives that he absolutely needed for the successful completion of his travel).

<sup>6</sup> Reinhold Münster, *Raum – Reise – Sinn: Spanien in der Reiseliteratur*. 2 vols. (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2017), 13.

[Space cannot be recognized, experienced, sensed, dreamed about, fantasized about, interpreted, and understood without movement. Travel/movement would lose any meaning without space. People are dependent on meaning because only the establishment of meaning enables the orientation – direction of walking, of the sensuous perception, and of the transcendence of the mind.]

He subsequently suggests differentiating between the space of ideas, the space of human life, and natural space,<sup>7</sup> but he also warns against the nihilistic theories of the New Constructivism according to which the entire world, as we perceive it, is the result of our own imagination and subsequent transformation of those images. Space exists, however, as Münster rightly insists, both ontologically and existentially, and this space is explored by way of human movement from the self to the other side, that is, through space, engaging with people and objects along the way. The history of literature is deeply determined by this realization and contributed to this experience as well, as many of the contributors to this volume confirm, though at time from differing perspectives. Travel – maybe expressed with this formula: ‘space x time = human identity – can thus be defined as a strategic epistemological maneuver to gain an understanding of the self and the world, which the so-called *Spatial Turn* has realized for quite some time now and urges us strongly to pursue in our critical examination of our study objects, both literary and other narratives and human artifacts.<sup>8</sup> Space is both a given and an entity which humans fill with affects, for instance, identifying space by way of emotional responses, embracing or rejecting a locality. As Barbara H. Rosenwein and Riccardo Cristiani now observe,

Affectual geographers (those who adopt affect theory) argue that people are affected by spaces in ways that are entirely unconscious and must remain forever unexpressed and inexpressible. Spaces themselves – where the transpersonal experience of affect may be seen most clearly – have agency, causing affective changes. After all, Space is defined by

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7 Münster, *Raum – Reise – Sinn* (see note 6), 14.

8 Münster, *Raum – Reise – Sinn* (see note 6), 26. For the pre-modern perspectives, which were certainly different than in the modern world (circular versus linear), see the contributions to *Virtuelle Räume, Raumwahrnehmung und Raumvorstellung im Mittelalter: Akten des 10. Symposiums des Mediävistenverbandes, Krems, 24.–26. März 2003*, ed. Elisabeth Vavra (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2005); for more general approaches, see the *Handbuch Literatur & Raum*, ed. Jörg Dünne and Andreas Mahler. Handbücher zur kulturwissenschaftlichen Philologie, 3 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015); *Literarische Räume der Herkunft: Fallstudien zu einer historischen Narratologie*, ed. Maximilian Benz and Katrin Dennerlein. Narratologia, 51 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016); *The Question of Space: Interrogating the Spatial Turn between Disciplines*, ed. Marijn Nieuwenhuis and David Crouch (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

things and people ... Space causes affective changes because bodies of every sort – human, non-human, transparent, dense – have affective capacity.<sup>9</sup>

Travel makes it possible to recognize space as highly meaningful, as communicative, and as an organic and highly relevant entity where we as individuals discover ourselves and other people around us, where we interact with the social environment and shape the self both consciously or unconsciously, or allow the self to be influenced by external factors or forces, whether inter- and transcultural contacts take place or not, whether a new understanding of foreign worlds and people emerge or not.

At the same time, space is not simply and entirely constructed through human perspectives since it can and does exist without us entirely, as archaeologists have demonstrated many times when they uncover abandoned houses, graves, cities, communities, temples, and other sites where nature has taken over. Virtually every human culture throughout time has experienced the ebb and flow of its own development, as, for instance, the history of cemeteries and funerals powerfully illustrates.<sup>10</sup> Every city, every monastery, every castle, and every village constitutes a cultural artifact which is subject to the transformation in time and space, and travelers, above all, clearly recognize the transitoriness of all cultural objects.

However, as travelers have always been able to confirm, one's leaving home and reaching new lands or places automatically triggers a change in attitude, awareness, consciousness, and perception, so spaces interact with us all the time, especially when the individual is on the move (Clifford).<sup>11</sup> After all, entering

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<sup>9</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein and Riccardo Cristiani, *What is the History of Emotions? What is History?* series (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018), 87.

<sup>10</sup> Romedio Schmitz-Esser, *Der Leichnam im Mittelalter: Einbalsamierung, Verbrennung und die kulturelle Konstruktion des toten Körpers*. *Mittelalter-Forschungen*, 48 (2014; Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2016), 337–403; together with my Ph.D. student Carolin Radtke I am currently translating this study into English (for Brepols). The history of space and its epistemology are of universal relevance; there is hardly any aspect of human culture, science, philosophy, art, etc. where space would not matter centrally; see, for instance, Paul Tillich, *Der Widerstreit von Raum und Zeit: Schriften zur Geschichtsphilosophie*, ed. Renate Albrecht. 2nd ed. (1963; Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018); see now also the contributions to *Augenblick und Zeitpunkt: Studien zur Zeitstruktur und Zeitmetaphorik in Kunst und Wissenschaften*, ed. Christian W. Thomsen and Hans Holländer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2018); cf. also Jochen Brüning and Matthias Staudacher, *Space – Time – Matter: Analytic and Geometric Structures* (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018). The literature on this vast topic is legion, but here I only want to point out how much the correlation of time and space matters within the context of travel and hence of human epistemology.

<sup>11</sup> See Clifford, *Routes* (see note 3), 34. This phenomenon with time and space intersecting intimately, the chronotope, is well explored both in theoretical and practical terms by Jiří Koten in

new spaces requires our responses to them, which involves communication, self-definition, comprehension of the new realm and framework of operation, and thus a constant reorientation in a changing world. This can have both positive and negative consequences, here disregarding the modern phenomenon of mass tourism which simply transplants people to another world for a short period of time for the plain purpose of relaxation and entertainment, as a form of vacation from home, but which has no noticeable or significant impact on the individual and his/her culture.

Travel or movement traditionally involves people, of course, but then also objects, animals and plants, and planets and stars, and it always carries significant meaning with respect to space and time. This has had huge implications for linguistics, performance-oriented scholarship (e.g., Theater Studies), literary research, and even philosophy, although there are also significant problems with an excessive theorizing for theory's sake, removing us too much from the actual issue at stake, the experience of space through travel.<sup>12</sup>

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his contribution to the present volume, focusing on late medieval Czech translations of German prose novels. He draws much inspiration from the reflections by Aaron J. Gurevich, as I do as well below in this Introduction. Cf. also the reflections by Anne Scott on Chaucerian approaches to those modalities of time, space, and travel in her contribution to this volume. For philosophical underpinnings of this conceptual pair of 'time and space,' see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (1927; Oxford: Blackwell, 1962). For critical comments, see, for instance, Gelven Michael, *A Commentary on Heidegger's "Being and Time": A Section-By-Section Interpretation* (New York and Evanston, IL: Harper & Row, 1970); *Hermeneutical Heidegger*, ed. Michael Bowler and Ingo Farin (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016).

**12** Annette Gerok-Reiter and Franziska Hammer, "Spatial Turn/Raumforschung," *Literatur- und Kulturtheorie in der germanistischen Mediävistik: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Christiane Ackermann and Michael Egerding (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 481–516, offer a solid summary of the most important theoretical underpinnings of the 'spatial turn' and its consequences, especially for literary scholarship. Their approach illustrates, however, at the same time the theoretical trappings, simply replacing the aspect of theater performance with space experience. Their emphasis rests, indeed, ultimately on performance as such, as is also mirrored in their lengthy bibliography. They have cited practically only German-language studies, and almost all are strongly determined by abstract notions of performance, such as the performativity of the social dimension, performance of language, and the philosophical basis of performance. Ultimately, this theoretical hypertrophy partially undermines its own validity and renders some of the reflections into speculative, playful abstractions. Cf. the criticism of constructivism in the comprehensive study by Reinhold Münster, *Raum – Reise – Sinn* (see note 6). See also Adam Barrows, *Time, Literature, and Cartography After the Spatial Turn: The Chronometric Imaginary*. Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Barney Warf and Santa Arias. Routledge Studies in Human Geography, 26 (New York and London: Routledge, 2009);

As several contributors to this volume underscore, much of the history of art, science, medicine, philosophy, and philology is predicated on travel insofar as ideas come together from many far-flung places and jell together at specific locations. Most paradigm shifts occurred, for instance, because new concepts were developed after outside inspiration or influence had entered the picture, leaving a significant impact on the individual. Scholars and clerics, teachers and architects, translators and leaders, masons and sculptors, poets and musicians, among many others, have been at the forefront of travel throughout time, and the more space there was available, and the freedom to move around, the more opportunities arose to change the global worldview, concepts, methods, languages, and ideas.<sup>13</sup>

To focus more on details for the purpose of the present volume, space simply means the three-dimensional environment where the individual exists and moves around, whether in concrete, physical form, or in imaginary terms, such as when an author allows the individual to carry out a vicarious journey. In this sense it makes perfect sense to talk, for instance, of rural space and urban space, while the court, the monastery, the Holy See, the Mediterranean, the desert, nomadic communities, forests, and so on, all constitute spaces as well, where specific forms of travel and movement also take place, each one creating avenues for the formation of the self, that is, its identity in correlation with time and space.<sup>14</sup> However, this very space is contingent on time and bodies, which has invited philosophers throughout history to reflect on their triangular relationship. According to Robert Rynasiewicz,

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Friederike Eigler, *Heimat, Space, Narrative: Toward a Transnational Approach to Flight and Expulsion*. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2014); Robert T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality*. New Critical Idiom (London and New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2013).

**13** See, for example, the studies by Nurit Golan, Maha Baddar, Sally Abed, Gavin Fort, and Thomas Willard in the present volume. Each one of them focuses on the experiences that travel had on individuals in their philosophical, cultural, and linguistic perceptions. Those insights drawn from the pre-modern world suddenly prove to be highly relevant for ourselves today and confirm, once again, how valuable the study of medieval or early modern narratives and historical aspects can be for us to gain a better insight into our existence. Cf. Clifford, *Routes* (see note 3), 34. As Maha Baddar illustrates particularly, ‘travel’ could also entail the movement of books or ideas across space, so everyone attending school or studying participates in a ‘travel’ through time and identity.

**14** See the contributions to *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen, with the collaboration of Christopher R. Clason. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 9 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012).

From antiquity into the eighteenth century, contrary views which denied that space and time are real entities maintained that the world is necessarily a material plenum. Concerning space, they held that the idea of empty space is a conceptual impossibility. Space is nothing but an abstraction we use to compare different arrangements of the bodies constituting the plenum. Concerning time, they insisted, there can be no lapse of time without change occurring somewhere. Time is merely a measure of cycles of change within the world.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, in the pre-modern world, both time and space were filled with meaning and situated within a divine cosmos which evolved according to the divine plan, as already early medieval artists reflected in a variety of manners.<sup>16</sup> In fact, late medieval and Renaissance artists such as the Spanish painters Fernando de Gallego and Master Bartolomé created between ca. 1480 and 1500 an enormous cycle of large scale images for the retablo in the cathedral of Ciudad Rodrigo southwest of Salamanca, beginning with chaos and ending with the Day of Judgment, closing all human history.<sup>17</sup> Here we observe an ekphrasis of sacred history, which is mirrored in thousands of other art works dedicated to religion both in the Christian and Hindu world, for instance. The Master of the Life of the Virgin, *Visitation*, a panel painting from 1470–1480, originally created for the Saint Ursula Church in Cologne, today kept in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, invited the viewer to gaze onto the famous religious scene, and then to travel with him into the background, combining spiritual with physical time.<sup>18</sup> An even more impressive example would be Giusto de Menabou's late fourteenth-century frescoes in the baptistery of the cathedral of Padua, Santa Maria Assunta, depicting world history in the external ring, and the heavenly entourage in the middle. While God the creator is the eternal center, unmovable, everything else circles

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Rynasiewicz, "Newton's Views on Space, Time, and Motion," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, online at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/newton-stm/#2> (first published in 2004, substantially revised in 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Anderson, *Cosmos and Community in Early Medieval Art* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2017).

<sup>17</sup> *The Retablo of the Cathedral of Ciudad Rodrigo, from the Samuel H. Kress Collections at the University of Arizona*, text by Robert M. Quinn, trans. into Spanish by Renato I. Rosaldo (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona, 1960); *Fernando Gallego and His Workshop: The Altarpiece from Ciudad Rodrigo: Paintings from the Collection of the University of Arizona Museum of Art*, ed. Amanda W. Dotseth, Barbara C. Anderson, and Mark A. Roglán (Dallas: Meadows Museum, SMU, and London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2008). The panels for the Day of Judgment are, unfortunately missing, or were never created since the ensemble concludes with Christ's Passion.

<sup>18</sup> The panel paintings were commissioned by Doctor Johann Schwartz-Hirtz; see online at: [https://www.wga.hu/html\\_m/m/master/life/bvisitat.html](https://www.wga.hu/html_m/m/master/life/bvisitat.html) (last accessed on March 14, 2018).

around him, indicating that all life is a travel to Him.<sup>19</sup> In this regard, we could even extend our argument further and identify most religious travel experiences in the pre-modern world as directed toward the metaphysical dimension, as Guillaume de Deguileville (ca. 1295–1358) expressed most powerfully in his highly popular *Le Pèlerinage de vie humaine* (ca. 1331, rev. ca. 1355). This allegorical text, very similar to William Langland's later *Piers Plowman* (ca. 1370/1380),

envisions the span of human life as a pilgrimage in the form of a dream. The narrator-protagonist sees the new Jerusalem (Heaven) in a mirror before his birth and sets forth on a pilgrimage there after he meets his guide, the Grace of God. En route, the pilgrim encounters personifications who represent the sacraments and the seven deadly sins before sailing over the sea of the world in a ship of religion, representing monastic life.<sup>20</sup>

In close parallel to it, we also could consider such philosophical treatises as Godfrey of Saint-Victor's *Fons Philosophiae* from ca. 1176 where the protagonist/author awakens from a dream and then sets out on a pilgrimage through a physically concrete and yet also highly metaphorical world toward the goal of the soul's salvation. In James L. Smith's words, "Through the mediating influence of water, the connector of everything, the pilgrim is given the image of a destination,

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**19** <http://corvinus.nl/2017/11/08/padova-the-baptistry-of-the-duomo/> (last accessed on March 14, 2018). I would like to thank Na'ama Shulman for pointing out these two art works to me. See the contributions to *Giusto de' Menabuoi nel Battistero di Padova*. Saggi di Benjamin Kohl, ed. Anna Maria Spiazzi (Trieste: Lint, 1989); *Padua – Taufkapelle der Kathedrale: Fresken von Giusto de' Menabuoi (14. Jh.)*, ed. Claudio Bellinat. 2nd ed. (1990; Padua: Deganello, 1994). This issue is discussed by Kristen Lippincott, "Giovanni di Padua's 'Creation of the World' and the Tradition of the 'Thema Mundi' In Late Medieval and Renaissance Art," *The Burlington Magazine* 132 (1990): 462–63; Nurit Golan, "The North Portal of the Freiburg im Breisgau Minster: Cosmological Imagery as Funerary Art," *Death in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: The Material and Spiritual Conditions of the Culture of Death*, ed. A. Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 16 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 155–91; here 173–79, esp. note 41; eadem, "A Portal to Knowledge: Science on Public Display in the Holy Cross Parish Church at Schwäbisch Gmünd," *Nuncius* 33 (2018): 25–55.

**20** Stephanie Kamath, "Deguileville," *Encyclopedia of Medieval Pilgrimage*, ed. Larissa J. Taylor, Leigh Ann Craig, et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 156–60; here 156. See also *The pèlerinage Allegories of Guillaume de Deguileville: Tradition, Authority and Influence*, ed. Marco Nievergelt. Gallica, 32 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2013). See now the excellent translation, Guillaume de Deguileville, *Le Pèlerinage de l'âme (The Pilgrimage of the Soul)*, trans. by Eugene Clasby. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 471 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2017). During our symposium in May 2017, my colleague Daniel Pigg from The University of Tennessee at Martin presented a relevant paper, "Making the Pilgrimage with Piers and to Piers: The Epistemology of Identity in William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, which unfortunately did not make it into this volume. The research literature on this topic is legion.



a target for the pull of his heart towards God.”<sup>21</sup> In fact, if we also consider Hugh of Saint Victor’s more or less contemporary *Didascalicon*, we can identify the true extent to which high medieval philosophers and theologians embraced the concept of travel to formulate their spiritual message. Little wonder that they were subsequently followed by a host of allegorical secular writers such as Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun because the quest for knowledge and the epiphanic realization of the divine message has always required the transcendence of all physical barriers.

Time and space have always combined and created a meaningful entity, as Christianity taught over thousand years ago already. And yet, concrete measuring and counting of time also entered the picture by the late Middle Ages, such as in Paris and in other major cities in Europe, which gave new meaning to space as well where the new clocks were installed.<sup>22</sup> Over the centuries, then, mechanical and spiritual measuring of time began to merge and yet then also diverged again, whereas the experience and search of the fundamental lesson of travel has continued to drive the individual until today.

In contrast to pre-modern ideas, Isaac Newton (1643–1727) “defined the true motion of a body to be its motion through absolute space. Those who, before or shortly after Newton, rejected the reality of space, did not necessarily deny that there is a fact of the matter as to the state of true motion of any given body.”<sup>23</sup> As to time, Newton observed: “Absolute, true, and mathematical time, from its own nature, passes equably without relation to anything external, and thus without reference to any change or way of measuring of time (e.g., the hour, day, month, or year).” According to this concept, the human individual lives all alone within an anonymous universe which knows no beginning and no end.

Regarding space, Newton remarked: “Absolute, true, and mathematical space remains similar and immovable without relation to anything external. (The specific meaning of this will become clearer below from the way it contrasts with Descartes’ concept of space.) Relative spaces are measures of absolute space defined with reference to some system of bodies or another, and thus a relative space may, and likely will, be in motion.” And as to motion, he

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<sup>21</sup> James L. Smith, *Water in Medieval Intellectual Culture: Case Studies from Twelfth-Century Monasticism*. *Cursor Mundi*, 30 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 86. Godfrey of Saint-Victor, *Fons philosophiae*. Texte publié et annoté par Pierre Michau-Quantin. *Analecta mediaevalia Namurcensia*, 8 (Namur: Editions Godenne, 1956); id., *The Fons of Philosophy: A Translation of the Twelfth-Century ‘Fons philosophiae’ of Godfrey of Saint Victor*, trans. Edward A. Synan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1972).

<sup>22</sup> Michael Sizer, “Capturing Time: the Monumentalization of Time Control in Western History,” *Crossings: Special Issue on Time* 9/10 (2011): 163–95.

<sup>23</sup> Rynasiewicz, “Newton’s Views” (see note 15).

concluded: “Absolute motion is the translation of a body from one absolute place to another; relative motion the translation from one relative place to another.”<sup>24</sup> The difference of this modern idea compared with medieval concepts could not be expressed more clearly, leaving the individual all by itself, knowing only of its own relativity within an endless space. However, even modern people do not simply despair over this realization, if they even know or accept it as the basic principle of their existence. Instead, most people, certainly also in the West, seem to be much more closely related to pre-modern notions of time and space, as we will see subsequently.

Intriguingly, virtually all great world literature is predicated on one form or the other of travel, of the experience of transformation within space, and the encounter with others, whether we think of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (ca. 850/700), Virgil’s *Aeneid* (ca. 19 B.C.E.), the Old English *Beowulf* (ca. 7th c.), the Middle High German courtly romances by Wolfram von Eschenbach (*Parzival*, ca. 1205) and Gottfried von Straßburg (*Tristan*, ca. 1210), the *Cantar de Mio Cid* (ca. 1200), Dante Alighieri’s *Divina Commedia* (completed ca. 1320), Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400), or Marguerite de Navarre’s collection, the *Heptaméron* (1558/1559). They all view time and space in an idiosyncratic fashion, but they also share the fundamental realization that the individual finds its identity within the correlation of those two elements since human existence is determined by its operation in a historical and geographical context.<sup>25</sup> We must also

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<sup>24</sup> Rynasiewicz, “Newton’s Views” (see note 15). See now also Edward J. Khamara, *Space, Time, and Theology in the Leibniz-Newton Controversy* (Frankfurt a. M.: Ontos-Verlag, 2006); Thomas de Padova, *Leibniz, Newton und die Erfindung der Zeit* (Munich and Zürich: Piper, 2015); Leonardo Ruiz Gómez, *El concepto leibniziano de espacio: la polémica con Clarke y el newtonianismo* (Pamplona: EUNSA, Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, S.A., 2014). For our purpose, it is sufficient to understand how much these concepts are subject to profound philosophical investigations, and this also in the pre-modern world. Already Aristotle engaged with these issues, as Rynasiewicz explains: “Time, according to Aristotle, is just the measure of motion, where by ‘motion’ he means a change of any sort, including qualitative change. In order to define the uniformity of time, that is, the notion of equal intervals of time, Aristotle was guided by astronomical practice, which in antiquity provided the most practical and accurate measures of time. He identified uniform motion with the rate of motion of the fixed stars, a choice for which he found a dynamical justification in his celestial physics.” See also the extensive bibliography in Rynasiewicz’s article.

<sup>25</sup> Silvan Wagner, *Erzählen im Raum: Die Erzeugung virtueller Räume im Erzählakt höfischer Epik*. Trends in Medieval Philology, 28 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015). For more fundamental insights, however, see Paul Zumthor, *La mesure du monde: Représentation de l’espace au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993). For west-European perspectives, see the contributions to *Occupying Space in Medieval and Early Modern Britain and Ireland*, ed. Gregory Hulsman and Caoimhe Whelan. Court Cultures of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, 4 (Oxford, Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 2016).

not forget Boccaccio's famous *Decameron* (ca. 1350) where the narrators flee the plague-infested city of Florence and travel to their country estates where they spend the time telling each other stories. Through this process they transcend time and space and reach many new imaginary worlds where basic human problems, concerns, issues, and conflicts can be explored and negotiated.<sup>26</sup> From here we could easily trace an infinitude of related works until the present time in which the protagonist travels throughout the world and finds him/herself, or rather not, and gets lost or no longer has control over his or her own identity, or the self, as in the Romantic short-story by Adelbert von Chamisso, *Peter Schlemihl* (1814). Here the protagonist has sold his shadow and later gains the miraculous boots that allow him to travel all over the world wherever there is firm land, a literary metaphor of the universal desire and need to go on journeys as part of human existence. The same motif was already at work in the anonymous *Fortunatus* (first printed in Augsburg in 1509), with the protagonist stealing a magical cap that allows him to transport himself within seconds to any place in the world where he imagines himself to be.<sup>27</sup> Similar travels have inspired novels, short stories, reports, and other narratives as they can be found all over the world and from throughout time.

Moreover, life, as mirrored in literature, seems to be a kind of journey by itself and thus needs to be viewed, when studied in theoretical terms, through the lens of time, space, and identity, which is essentially cast in the concept of travel. How many times have we heard of the literary motif of traveling down

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26 Boccaccio *geografo: un viaggio nel Mediterraneo tra le città, i giardini e ... il "mondo"* di Giovanni Boccaccio, ed. Roberta Morosini, together with Andrea Cantile. *Storie del mondo*, 4 (Florence: Pagliai, 2010); see also the contributions to *Topodynamics of Arrival: Essays on Self and Pilgrimage*, ed. Gert Hofmann and Snježana Zorić. *Spatial Practices*, 14 (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2012).

27 Reinhard Heinritz, "Andere fremde Welten": *Weltreisebeschreibungen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. *Literatura*, 6 (Würzburg: Ergon-Verlag, 1998); Johannes Görbert, *Die Vertextung der Welt: Forschungsreisen als Literatur bei Georg Forster, Alexander von Humboldt und Adelbert von Chamisso*. *WeltLiteraturen*, 7 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014); Beatrix Langner, *Der wilde Europäer: Adelbert von Chamisso* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2008); *Weltreise: Forster – Humboldt – Chamisso – Ottinger*, ed. Jutta Weber and Michael Fürst. *Ausstellungskataloge / Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Neue Folge*, 60 (Berlin: Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 2015). For a solid edition of *Fortunatus*, see *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts: Nach den Erstdrucken mit sämtlichen Holzschnitten*, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller. *Bibliothek der Frühen Neuzeit*, 1 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1990), 383–585; cf. Albrecht Classen, "Die Welt eines spätmittelalterlichen Kaufmannsreisenden. Ein mentalitätsgeschichtliches Dokument der Frühneuzeit: *Fortunatus*," *Monatshefte* 86.1 (1994): 22–44; id., "Fremdbegegnung, Dialog, Austausch, und Staunen: Xenologische Phänomene in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters. Vom *Hildebrandslied* bis zum *Fortunatus*," *Mediaevistik* 26 (2013): 183–206.

to the underworld, *catabasis*, the experience of observing, conversing, or fraternizing with the shadows of those who had previously been among the living? Many religious and mythological narratives in world literature contain the theme of *catabasis*, and each time the traveler returns, deeply transformed, and, commonly, having finally found the true path toward his/her destiny.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, travel to another, utopian space has also been a fundamental feature in world literature, and this already in the Middle Ages, if we think of Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (ca. 1210), the anonymous Old French *Aucassin et Nicolette* (thirteenth century), or the rich world of medieval mystical literature.<sup>29</sup>

Reinhold Münster observes that human existence is constituted through the movement across space, as we can constantly identify through a closer analysis of the relevant literary testimonies: "Begegnungen verlangen eine Bewertung, eine Einschätzung, eine Stellungnahme – mithin einen Ort, von welchem aus Denken und Handeln geschieht" (Encounters demand an evaluation, a judgment, a taking stock of oneself; hence a space in which thinking and action take place).<sup>30</sup>

While the term 'xenology' commonly refers to science fiction, it fittingly circumscribes the critical process of opening up one's own world and allowing the foreign one to enter, or to turn oneself toward a new culture. In fact, we might say that all cultural developments are deeply influenced by xenological experiences insofar as they gain, through the external impact, new energies, new directions, and can thus reach out to new dimensions. This comes very close to the recent theoretical model of transculturality, which I will discuss below. We might further be able to formulate a global theory of culture by way of studying personal contacts, travel by individuals, meetings of groups of people, and institutional assembly places, such as monasteries, universities, the courts, and the educational system of the craftsmen who were forced by their guilds to cross parts of Europe in order to learn new skills from different masters.<sup>31</sup> In short, craftsmen and artists have

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**28** See the contribution to this volume by Warren Tormey. See also the contributions to *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys*, ed. John J. Collins and Michael A. Fishbane (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995); the online article on this topic proves to be quite useful: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katabasis> (last accessed on Feb. 12, 2018).

**29** Heiko Hartmann, "Utopias/Utopian Thought," *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 1400–08.

**30** Münster, *Raum – Reise – Sinn* (see note 6), 51–52.

**31** Wolfgang Metzler, *Handel und Handwerk des Mittelalters im Spiegel der Buchmalerei* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 2002); Sabine von Heusinger, *Die Zunft im Mittelalter: Zur Verflechtung von Politik, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Straßburg*. Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Beihefte, 206 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009); *Handwerk im Mittelalter*, ed. Christine Sauer (Darmstadt: Primus-Verlag, 2012); Eva Jullien, *Die Handwerker*

often been the greatest travelers in past and present and have regularly contributed to the expansion of cultures, ideals, values, styles, techniques, and experiences, although it has proven quite difficult to trace their specific impact due to a lack of sources.<sup>32</sup>

Curiously, but quite significantly, the great interest in monsters since late antiquity, which has continued well into the present time, represents a visual dimension of this constant confrontation of self and other, that is, the experience of distant worlds and their creatures, beautifully expressed spatially by the many medieval *mappaemundi* and early modern maps and atlases.<sup>33</sup> Alterity,

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und *Zünfte der Stadt Luxemburg im Spätmittelalter*. Städteforschung, 96 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2017). The latter study is particularly valuable for our investigations because the author focuses also on the distribution of the various crafts within the city and their socio-economic relations to each other and the upper classes. Economic conditions thus prove to be crucial components in the structuring of social space. See also the contribution to this volume by Charlotte A. Stanford.

**32** Tradesmen and merchants have often played a major role in creating international networks across all linguistic, religious, political, and cultural divides; see, for instance, Gunther Hirschfelder, *Die Kölner Handelsbeziehungen im Spätmittelalter*. Veröffentlichungen des Kölnischen Stadtmuseums, X (Cologne: Kölnisches Stadtmuseum, 1994); Carolin Wirtz, *Köln und Venedig: wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Beziehungen im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*. Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, Beihefte, 57 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2006); Jens T. Wollesen, "East Meets West and the Problem with Those Pictures," *East Meets West* (see note 3), 341–88; Albrecht Classen, "Craftsmanship and the Guilds in the Late Middle Ages: The Testimony of *Des Teufels Netz* and of the *Mendel and Landauer Housebooks*," *History Research*, Jan.-Mar., 2016, Vol. 6, No. 1, 23–39 doi 10.17265/2159-550X/2016.01.003.

**33** Albrecht Classen, "The Epistemological Function of Monsters in the Middle Ages: From *The Voyage of Saint Brendan* to *Herzog Ernst*, Marie de France, Marco Polo and John Mandeville. What Would We Be Without Monsters in Past and Present!" *Lo Sguardo: Rivista di filologia* 9.2 (2012): 13–34; *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittman with Peter J. Dendle (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013); cf. also the extensive collection of articles on the monstrous, *Fantastische Monster: Bilderwelten zwischen Grauen und Komik*, ed. Peggy Große, G. Ulrich Großmann, and Johannes Pommeranz (Nuremberg: Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, 2015). See also Rudolf Simek, *Monster im Mittelalter: Die phantastische Welt der Wundervölker und Fabelwesen* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2015), 64–68. As to the world maps, see, for instance, *The History of Cartography*, Vol. II: *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. John B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae: Die Enden der Erde und der vierte Kontinent auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica 36 (Hanover: Hahn, 1992); Brigitte Englisch, *Ordo Orbis Terrae: Die Weltsicht in den Mappaemundi des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*. Orbis mediaevalis. Vorstellungswelten des Mittelalters, 3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002); Margriet Hoogvliet, *Pictura et scriptura: textes, images et herméneutique des Mappaemundi (XIIIe – XVIe siècle)*. Terrarum orbis, 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007); Marjo T. Nurminen, *The Mapmakers' World: A Cultural History of the European World Map* (Oxford and Havertown, PA: Pool of

otherness, and foreignness are various terms for the common experience people have had throughout time when they leave the safety of their home and enter an unknown and confounding world, as countless literary narratives and poems have illustrated most vividly.<sup>34</sup>

The effort to explore the world and to reach every possible corner was of great importance already in antiquity, and it continued strongly into the Middle Ages, today reaching not only the limits of the globe but also of the solar system and far beyond.<sup>35</sup> The reasons are easy to list, that is, commerce, pilgrimage, war, political prestige (peripatetic kingship), arts and crafts, literary patronage, marriage, education, and scientific or general curiosity.<sup>36</sup> Significantly, the study of travel through the lens of the written documents proves to be one important avenue toward this issue, but we also would have to consider the material conditions making this travel possible in the first place, that is, the road system, bridges, tunnels, mountain passes, and vehicles and animals, together with taverns, inns, hostels, monasteries, the Venetian Fondaco dei Tedeschi, and other locations.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, travel did not only involve individuals, but objects such as artwork, furniture, foodstuff, tools, weapons, and textiles; in addition, books traveled as

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London, 2015). There are countless reproductions of medieval and early modern *mappaemundi* online. See now the contributions to this volume by Na'ama Shulmann, Romedio Schmitz-Esser, and David Tomíček.

**34** Albrecht Classen, "Fremdbegegnung, Dialog, Austausch, und Staunen: Xenologische Phänomene in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters. Vom *Hildebrandslied* bis zum *Fortunatus*," *Medievalistik* 26 (2013): 183–206; Charles Connell, "Foreigners and Fear," *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 1 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 489–536.

**35** *Welterfahrung und Welterschließung in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Anna Kathrin Bleuler together with Anja-Mareike Klingbeil. Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit, 5 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016).

**36** For a good overview, with a detailed discussion of the relevant research literature, see Romedio Schmidt-Esser, "Travel and Exploration in the Middle Ages," *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 3 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 1680–704. See also the massive volume *Trade, Travel, and Exploration in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. John Block Friedman and Kristen Mossler Figg (New York and London: Garland, 2000).

**37** Albrecht Classen, "Roads, Streets, Bridges, and Travelers," *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 3 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 1511–34. See also the contributions to *Reisen im Diskurs: Modelle der literarischen Fremderfahrung von den Pilgerberichten bis zur Postmoderne. Tagungsakten des Internationalen Symposions zur Reiseliteratur, University College Dublin vom 10.–12. März 1994*, ed. Anne Fuchs. Neue Bremer Beiträge, 8 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 1995); *Voyages, rencontres, échanges au XVIIe siècle: Marseille carrefour*, ed. Sylvie Requémora-Gros. Biblio, 17 (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2017).

well, creating amazing intellectual networks over time and space, and this already since the early Middle Ages.<sup>38</sup> Librarians, book collectors, translators, scribes, book illuminators, patrons, and other people were keenly interested in acquiring books and either commissioned copies made or purchased manuscripts at distant locations. However, many books were borrowed and never returned, and the ‘profession’ of actual book thieves has a very long tradition. Books were important components of dowries and contributed essentially to the dissemination of culture across vast territories.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, books were treasured as representative icons of power and authority, and so they were constantly transported from one library to the other.

While movements from one point to another constitute an essential aspect of human existence, the exchanges between people, the impressions gained in that process, and the transformations on the side of the active and the passive observer deserve much more attention than has been granted so far in the relevant research literature. Naturally, the number of important and insightful investigations regarding travel in the pre-modern world is legion by now, and it would be tantamount to carrying the proverbial coals to Newcastle if we were to review the global history of this topic once again.

Nevertheless, it certainly deserves to be noted and then to be examined more carefully what travel meant in specific terms and how it contributed to cultural, literary, religious, artistic, and philosophical history especially because every travel or traveler has crossed borders, cultural boundaries, identity zones, and familiar territories. Intriguingly, travel writing has not declined since 1500; on the contrary, this genre experienced a tremendous explosion afterwards and even gained

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**38** See the contribution to this volume by Maha Baddar. Cf. also the studies collected in *Texts in Transit in the Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. Y. Tzvi Langermann and Robert G. Morrison (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016).

**39** Susan Groag Bell, “Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture,” *Signs* 7.4 (Summer, 1982): 742–68. Similarly, wedding negotiations were important opportunities throughout the Middle Ages to bridge contrasting cultures or to build connections over long distances; and in that process many letters traveled back and forth; see Christina Antenhofer, *Briefe zwischen Süd und Nord: Die Hochzeit und Ehe von Paula de Gonzaga und Leonhard von Görz im Spiegel der fürstlichen Kommunikation (1473–1500)*. Schlern-Schriften, 336 (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2007). See also *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe*, ed. Sarah Rees Jones, Richard Marks, and A. J. Minnis (Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press with University of York, 2000); Alfred Thomas, *Reading Women in Late Medieval Europe: Anne of Bohemia and Chaucer’s Female Audience*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); *Medieval Women and Their Objects*, ed. Jenny Adams and Nancy Mason Bradbury (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2017).

predominance within the early modern book market.<sup>40</sup> By the same token, travel occurs numerous times in medieval narratives, especially both in heroic epics and courtly romances, but we could also list many other genres where the individual traverses time and space in the quest for the divine, the understanding of this material existence, and for the own destiny. Most critically, as Ingrid Kasten now observes, the protagonist is regularly required to transgress barriers and thresholds in order to embark on the travel toward the other side of the ocean, forest, or mountain, and in this movement the individual transforms and discovers him/herself and the beloved other, such as Tristan in Gottfried von Straßburg's eponymous romance (ca. 1210) or Partonopier in Konrad von Würzburg's *Partonopier und Meliur* (ca. 1285) in German literature,<sup>41</sup> or many of the Viking warriors in the various Old Norse sagas, such as *Njál's Saga* (ca. 1270–1290) or *Egil's Saga* (first half of the thirteenth century), not to forget the numerous versions of the pan-European narrative of Alexander the Great and his exploration and conquest of the Middle East, such as the biography by Quintus Curtius Rufus (1st century C.E.), the chronicle by Paulus Orosius (417/418), the *Historia scholastica* by Petrus Comestor (1169–1173), or Lambrecht's *Alexanderroman* (ca. 1150).<sup>42</sup>

Travel implies a movement through time and space and finds its expression in the Bakhtinian chronotope, a term originally developed in Bakhtin's 1937 essay "Формы времени и хронотопа в романе," published in English as "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel." Here Bakhtin explored how different authors throughout time operated with different configurations of time and

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<sup>40</sup> Chunjie Zhang, *Transculturality and German Discourse in the Age of European Colonialism* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017); Jürgen Lüsebrink, "Faszination und Wissensdurst: Zu den Grenzen und Möglichkeiten interkulturellen (Miss-) Verstehens in den Werken Georg Forsters und seiner Zeitgenossen," *Georg-Forster-Studien* 12 (2007): 77–97; see also *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Alfred Bendixen and Judith Hamera (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). For modern examples, see, for instance, Uwe Hentschel, *Studien zur Reiseliteratur am Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts: Autoren - Formen - Ziele. Studien zur Reiseliteratur- und Imagologieforschung*, 4 (Frankfurt a. M. et al.: Peter Lang, 1999); Andreas Keller and Winfried Siebers, *Reiseliteratur. Germanistik kompakt* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2017).

<sup>41</sup> Ingrid Kasten, "Raum, Leib, Bewegung: Aspekte der Raumgestaltung in Gottfrieds *Tristan*," *Transkulturalität und Translation: Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters im europäischen Kontext*, ed. eadem and Laura Auteri (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 127–44.

<sup>42</sup> Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough, *Beyond the Northlands: Viking Voyages and the Old Norse Sagas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); see also the contributions to *Travels in the North: A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Long History of Northern Travel Writing. Proceedings of a Multidisciplinary Symposium in Paris, 5 – 6 October 2011*, ed. Silje Gaupseth, Marie-Theres Federhofer, and Per Pippin Aspaas (Hanover: Wehrhahn, 2013).



space, which always create particular narrative features and principles. In his *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin defines the chronotope as follows:

We will give the name chronotope (literally, “time space”) to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. This term [space-time] is employed in mathematics and was introduced as part of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity. The special meaning it has in relativity theory is not important for our purposes; we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely). What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space). We understand the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature; we will not deal with the chronotope in other areas of culture.’ In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.

The chronotope in literature has an intrinsic generic significance. It can even be said that it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and generic distinctions, for in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time. The chronotope as a formally constitutive category determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature as well. The image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic.<sup>43</sup>

Many scholars have begun to engage with these fundamental insights, which also appear to be quite applicable to literature from the pre-modern world, although the experience of time and space in the Middle Ages was certainly a different one from that experience in the modern world, as Aaron J. Gurevich emphasized most explicitly.<sup>44</sup> After all, the individual has always been determined by the

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<sup>43</sup> M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin, trans. by Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84.

<sup>44</sup> Aaron J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, trans. from the Russian by G. L. Campbell (London, Boston, Melbourne, and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985); see also the contributions to *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames*, ed. Brian Richardson (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2002); cf. now Uta Störmer-Caysa, *Grundstrukturen mittelalterlicher Erzählungen: Raum und Zeit im höfischen Roman*. de Gruyter Studienbuch (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007); *Space/Time Practices and the Production of Space and Time*, ed. Sebastian Dorsch (Cologne: GESIS, Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, 2013); *Bakhtin and His Others: (Inter)Subjectivity, Chronotope, Dialogism*, ed. Liisa Steinby and Tintti Klapuri. Anthem Series on Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies (London and New York: Anthem Press, 2013); *The Ideologies of Lived Space in Literary Texts, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Jacqueline Klooster and Jo Heirman. Open Textbook Library (Gent: Academia Press; Minneapolis, MN: Open Textbook Library, 2013); Ines Detmers and Michael Os-theimer, *Das temporale Imaginäre: zum Chronotopos als Paradigma literaturästhetischer Eigenzeiten*. Ästhetische Eigenzeiten. Kleine Reihe, 4 (Hanover: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2016). Bakhtin’s highly productive term of the ‘chronotope’ has influenced scholars in many different fields,

interstices of time and space as well as spatial dimensions and chronological constraints, although all those have hardly ever been the same over an extensive period of time.

In philosophical investigations, it has long been recognized how important the interactions are between the coordinates of location and extension, stasis, and movement. Martin Heidegger highlighted the notion of *wohnen* in his famous essay “Bauen Wohnen Denken” from 1951,<sup>45</sup> while Gaston Bachelard underscored the relevance of spatiality for all human existence in his monograph *La Poétique de l'espace* (1957), which Mircea Eliade complemented with his investigation of *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (1957).<sup>46</sup> Space is being discovered all the time through physical movements, whether travel or activities, but it can also be explored by means of the imagination, as Gaston Bachelard outlined in his analysis, which also appeared in 1957.<sup>47</sup> In other words, we as human beings create our own world, and the true limit of this world is only our

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both in medieval and modern literature; see, for instance, *Bakhtin in Contexts: Across the Disciplines*, ed. Amy Mandelker; with an intro. by Caryl Emerson. Rethinking Theory (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995). See now also the solid contribution to the present volume by Jiří Koten.

<sup>45</sup> Heidegger also explored the concept of the “Kehre,” i.e., the turn of events, or a switchback of a mountain road, etc., philosophically meaning the new orientation in a discourse, which involves the transition from one space to another. Martin Heidegger, *Die Technik und die Kehre*, 13th ed. (1962; Stuttgart: Klett Cotta, 2014); cf. Michael Wheeler, “Martin Heidegger,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), online at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/heidegger/>, summarizes this as follows: “In the wake of his critique of Cartesianism, Heidegger turns his attention to spatiality. He argues that Dasein dwells in the world in a spatial manner, but that the spatiality in question – Dasein’s existential spatiality – cannot be a matter of Dasein being located at a particular co-ordinate in physical, Cartesian space. That would be to conceive of Dasein as present-at-hand, and presence-at-hand is a mode of Being that can belong only to entities other than Dasein. According to Heidegger, the existential spatiality of Dasein is characterized most fundamentally by what he calls de-severance, a bringing close.” See also Dieter Thomä, “Stichwort Kehre: Was wäre, wenn es sie nicht gäbe?,” *Heidegger-Handbuch: Leben - Werk - Wirkung*, ed. id. together with Katrin Meyer and Hans Bernhard Schmid (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), 134–41.

<sup>46</sup> Molly Robinson Kelly, *The Hero’s Place: Medieval Literary Traditions of Space and Belonging* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 1–3; 13–28; Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>47</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957). See also the work by the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, *A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); id., *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), where he observes, “‘Space’ is more abstract than ‘place’. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (6).

imagination, which attributes such an overarching significance to the literary discourse both past and present.

In strong contrast to the pre-modern world, people in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries still tend to be settled here and there, but the constantly growing degree of mobility uproots many and creates a mass movement involving millions, such as the migrants from all over the world as we have witnessed them in recent years more than ever before. However, the loss of space, hence of home, and the need to travel to find new spaces has also meant an enormous degree of ‘homelessness’ or, in Edward Relph’s terms (1976), “placelessness” leading to a “real deprivation,” whereas pre-modern travelers tended to move within a cosmos determined by their spiritual coordinates. The idea of travel just for travel’s sake, the famous ‘cavalier’s tour,’ of the ‘Grand Tour,’ did not emerge until the fifteenth and sixteenth century.<sup>48</sup>

This deprivation refers to the loss of meaning and identity, as Yi-Fu Tan has observed, giving much credit to literature, above all, as an experimental stage to explore human culture with its contradictions, challenges, promises, and conflicts. It is a “thought experiment on possible modes of human experience and relationship ... as artifact [that] reveals the environmental perceptions and values of a culture ... [and] as an ambitious attempt to balance the subjective and the objective [that] is a model for geographical synthesis.”<sup>49</sup> If we do not understand the place where we are situated, meaning and identity are in danger of getting

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<sup>48</sup> Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 145. As to the cavalier’s tour, see Werner Paravicini, *Ehrenvolle Abwesenheit* (see note 4), 12–25; see also the contributions to *Grand Tour: Adliges Reisen und europäische Kultur vom 14. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rainer Babel and Werner Paravicini. Beihefte der Francia, 60 (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2005); Attilio Brilli, *Il grande racconto: dei viaggi d’esplorazione, di conquista e d’avventura* (Bologna: Il mulino, 2015); see also the contributions to *Prinzen auf Reisen: die Italienreise von Kurprinz Karl Albrecht 1715/16 im politisch-kulturellen Kontext*, ed. Andrea Zedler and Jörg Zedler. Karl-Graf-Spreti-Symposium, 6 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2017).

<sup>49</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, “Literature and Geography: Implications for Geographical Research,” *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems*, ed. David Ley and Marwyn S. Samuels (Chicago: Maaroufa Press, 1978), 194–206; here 205. I have quoted here from Molly Robinson Kelly, *The Hero’s Place* (see note 46), whose work has provided much inspiration for these theoretical reflections. The journal *Humanities Open Access* (online) has surfaced as a major scholarly platform for interdisciplinary research connecting the Humanities with a wide range of relevant investigative approaches, so it does not come as a surprise that the issue of space and time also matters profoundly in many contributions; see, for instance, Gavin Little, “Connecting Environmental Humanities: Developing Interdisciplinary Collaborative Method,” *Humanities Open Access* 6.4 (2017); doi:10.3390/h6040091.

lost, as Vincent Berdoulay suggested in an article published in 1987.<sup>50</sup> Space and place, however, are always recognized, established, assumed, and integrated by means of movement insofar as the individual has first to understand the self and its environment, borders, and difference to others, including to other spaces, and then progresses in comprehending the universal dimension of the human existence, determined by the lives of individuals in context or conjunction with each other and within a spatial framework.<sup>51</sup>

As medieval and early modern literature clearly illustrates, and as we can demonstrate in many texts composed in the following centuries as well, we simply cannot afford to ignore those two dimensions or focus only on one of them to the exclusion of the other because they constitute the foundation for identity formation. We do not have to concern ourselves with the problem of measuring time in earlier times, which was certainly not as sophisticated as it became later by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, it deserves to be mentioned that all people throughout time are aware of time and take note of its passing in some

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**50** Vincent Berdoulay, "Place, Meaning, and Discourse in French Language Geography," *The Power of Place*, ed. John Agnew and James Duncan (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 124–39; see also the contributions to *Humanistic Geography and Literature: Essays on the Experience of Place*, ed. Douglas C. D. Pocock. Croom Helm Series in Geography and Environment (London: Croom Helm, 1981). Similar insights as to the profound importance of space for human development in childhood have been produced in more recent years; see, for instance, Matthias Wilk, *Der Raum als Erzieher: die Bedeutung des Raumes für die kindliche Bildung und Entwicklung* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2016). Naturally, space centrally also matters for architecture; see, for instance, Achim Hahn, *Architektur und Lebenspraxis: Für eine phänomenologisch-hermeneutische Architekturtheorie*. Architekturen, 40 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2017).

**51** Münster, *Raum – Reise – Sinn* (see note 6), 51; see already Michael Dickhardt, *Das Räumliche des Kulturellen: Entwurf zu einer kulturanthropologischen Raumtheorie am Beispiel Fiji* (Münster, Hamburg, and London: Lit, 2000); Martina Löw, *Raumsoziologie* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2001); *Raumtheorie: Grundlagentexte aus Philosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Jörg Dünne and Stephan Günzel, together with Hermann Doetsch and Roger Lüdeke (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2006). The correlation of time and space is, of course, the research topic of many scholars in a variety of disciplines; see, for instance, Clemena Antonova, *Space, Time, and Presence in the Icon: Seeing the World with the Eyes of God* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010); Michel Serafinelli and Guido Tabellini, *Creativity Over Time and Space* (London: Centre for Economic Policy Research, 11 October 2017); *Time and Space in Ancient Myth, Religion and Culture*, ed. Menelaos Christopoulos, Athina Papachrysostomou, and Anton Bierl. *MythosEikonPoesis*, 10 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017). See also the reflections by Ingrid Kasten, "Raum, Leib, Bewegung" (see note 41). She differentiates between large spaces, such as the ocean and the land, spaces of lament ("Klageräume"), courtly spaces, although we could easily identify other types of spaces as well, such as the forest, the island, the river, the lake, the cave, etc. Would not the human mind, i.e., the imagination be the largest space of them all?

way or other, as the numerous efforts of measuring time have demonstrated.<sup>52</sup> The passing of time also reminds us of our location in space, and each location reminds us in its own terms of the time of our presence there. All our activities, routine or exceptional, take place in a time-continuum and pass sequentially, not circularly, at least according to western thinking. The more we move or travel, the more we can acquire an awareness or knowledge of space within its chronological conditions.

Moreover, both aspects, time and space, can be subdivided into their macro- and microcosmic dimensions since we, as human beings, perceive our spatiality and ‘chronicality,’ as I would like to call it, both on a global, if not even cosmic level and on a microscopic, minute level as well. We could henceforth approach every cultural period, such as the Middle Ages, with the same question regarding the awareness and perception of time and space, being certain that we will receive different answers.

Every social group, class, gender, age group, and so on, operates differently in its own spatial and time configurations. Monks, for instance, live in a time frame different from that perceived by peasants; children regard their world in terms different than those embraced by adults; merchants perceive time and space very idiosyncratically in contrast to knights or scholars. Life in rural communities has always proven to be different from life in urban centers, and much depends on one’s profession, social background, religious orientation, level of education, and so forth. In essence, we could thus formulate that life at large is determined by our configurations in time and space and how we operate in both. As G. J. Withrow already formulated, “A highly developed sense of rhythm enabled a tribe to function with precision as a single unit both in war and in

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52 Matthew S. Champion, *The Fullness of Time: Temporalities of the Fifteenth-Century Low Countries* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017); for concrete concepts of time and taking of time, see Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (1992; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); see also the contributions to *Zeitbegriff: Zeitmessung und Zeitverständnis im städtischen Kontext*, ed. Willibald Katzinger. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Städte Mitteleuropas, XVII (Linz: Österreichischer Arbeitskreis für Stadtgeschichtsforschung, 2002); Roger S. Wieck, *The Medieval Calendar: Locating Time in the Middle Ages* (London and New York: Scala Arts & Heritage Publishers Ltd, 2017); for more specific perspectives on time, see the contributions to *Reconsidering Gender, Time and Memory in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Elisabeth Cox. Gender in the Middle Ages, 10 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015). See now also Matthew S. Champion, *The Fullness of Time: Temporalities of the Fifteenth-Century Low Countries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), who traces the experience of time in the urban space, in the clerical space, and in historiographical terms particularly in Leuven and Ghent. For a specific example of how time measuring began in Paris and elsewhere as a means by the king to demonstrate his power in public spaces, see Sizer, “Capturing Time” (see note 22).

hunting. Time is experienced by man in the periodicity of his own life as well as in the periodicity of the natural world.”<sup>53</sup>

Subsequently, we can expand on this observation and also include space as the necessary coordinate for the individual both in the past and in the present to establish his/her individuality or sense of being. This would explain, for instance, the countless references to specific dates at which a knight was supposed to meet a challenger to fight over alleged claims of insult or shortcomings. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (ca. 1370/1380), for instance, the protagonist only knows that he must find the Green Knight the following year. However, it is entirely unclear to him where the Green Chapel might be and where his opponent will expect him, ready to decapitate his victim without the other having any right to fight against him. At first, the Green Knight refuses to give specifics and insists that Gawain first strikes off his head; and once that has happened, the grisly head says:

Be sure, Gawain, you are geared to go, as you said,  
And also to search faithfully until you find me, sir,  
As ye have vowed in this hall, these knights having heard.  
To the Green Chapel you must journey, I command you, to get  
The dreaded blow you have delivered; you have deserved  
To yield after Yule on New Year's morn.<sup>54</sup>

Even though Gawain is ignorant about that mysterious chapel, the Green Knight insists that he needs not to worry about this aspect: “Many men know me, the knight of the Green Chapel” (v. 454) and that hence, by careful investigation, Gawain “will never fail to find me if you follow my advice” (v. 455). This comes true at the end, although the protagonist does not have to die and can preserve his honor, despite a certain degree of shame on his part because he did not return the green belt with its magical powers to his host, Bercilak de Hautdesert, as agreed upon for their wager during three days of holiday fun. This subsequently forces Gawain to leave the safety of the Arthurian court and to explore the wilderness in his search for the Green Chapel. This journey quickly translates into a metaphorical quest in which he has to rally all of his physical and spiritual forces in order to survive, both the freezing temperature of the winter landscape and

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<sup>53</sup> Gerald. J. Withrow, *What is Time?* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), 4; see also Ken Mondscheim and Denis Casey, “Time and Time Keeping,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Vol. 3 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 1657–79.

<sup>54</sup> *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: A Dual-Language Version*, ed. and trans. by William Vantuono. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1265 (New York and London: Garland, 1991), vv. 448–53.

the sexual temptations by Bercilak's wife.<sup>55</sup> His entire existence is at stake, and he is extremely aware of the true value of every moment during which he passes through an unfamiliar world facing an almost certain death – again a literary metaphor of human existence.

At the very moment when he is about to despair ever finding a place to stay over the Christmas holidays, that is, being lost in time and space and stuck in the winter landscape, after having prayed to the Virgin Mary, he discovers the amazing castle Hautdesert and is most warmly welcomed there, although it proves to be only a respite and a further challenge for him because in the comfort of his warm bed he has to resist the offered pleasures of sexual seduction. Gawain succeeds in this because he is most mindful of his status as a guest and of the honor he is obliged to pursue vis-à-vis his host, but this is not even the final challenge since he still has to search further and reach his ultimate goal, the Green Chapel. In fact, at that very moment, when he is led by a servant in the right direction, being on the road again, so to speak, the ultimate task presents itself, to resist the temptation of saving his own life. Although he is convinced that the servant would keep his promise and would never reveal the truth about Gawain's escape in that critical situation, he rejects the invitation and can thus move forward, both physically and spiritually:

May good fortune settle on you, sir, who desire my safety,  
And we certainly would keep the secret; I am sure you would,  
But even if you held it always inside, and I from here did pass,  
Wandering away in far, fleeing far, as you say,  
I would be a cowardly courtier, excused I could not be.  
Now, whatever fate may befall, I will fare to the chapel,  
And say to that same foe the speech that I wish,  
Whether for my welfare or woe, as fate would have it for me

(vv. 2127–34).

In other words, Gawain formulates very clearly that life is a journey, and that shortcuts mostly prove to be detrimental to one's well-being, hurting one's honor, and undermining the path toward the self-fulfillment in the most ideal fashion.

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55 Gillian Rudd, "'The Wilderness of Wirral' in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Arthuriana* 23.1 (2013): 52–65; Michael G. Cornelius, "Sir Gawain's Unfulfilled/Unfulfilling Quest," *The Hero's Journey*, ed. Harold Bloom. Bloom's Literary Themes (New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2009), 195–205; Ordelle G. Hill, *Looking Westward: Poetry, Landscape, and Politics in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2009); María Luisa Dañobeitia Fernández, "El viaje de Gawain: Un estudio de *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* 13–14 (1987): 35–53. Research on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is legion, of course.

Significantly, in our context it also deserves to be pointed out how much the anonymous poet delicately elaborates on the spatiality throughout his romance, whether we think of Gawain's long journey through the wintry landscape, the three days of hunting carried out by Bercilak as part of his deal in the competition against Gawain, Gawain's travel toward the Green Chapel, and his return home, and this time as a deeply changed man, humbled but much more mature and in full understanding and command of honor.<sup>56</sup>

As the poet indicates, only because he left King Arthur's court was he able to grow and learn about himself and the greater dangers in the world concerning one's ethics, morality, and personal integrity. We also recognize the great symbolism of the specific time spans granted to each major narrative section, whether we think of the passing of a whole year, the coming of Christmas, the three days of rest in the castle, and Gawain's quick return home after the contest has been completed. Significantly, at that moment the narrator withholds any comments about the freezing temperature or the frozen winter landscape, and instead grants time to move forward much faster than before because the epistemological transformation in Gawain has already taken place, while the Arthurian court and hence we as the audience only have to learn the crucial lesson.

The focus of the present volume rests on the concept of travel in the pre-modern world, but this is only one aspect of the chronotope because the move from one location to the other automatically influences and determines the self and transforms it in that process, which has taken place throughout time all over the world. Particularly in biographical writing already from the Middle Ages do we observe the great significance of space for the development of the poetic self, such as in Dante's *Vita Nuovo*, because the individual comes forward through movement through space.<sup>57</sup> Some of the greatest developments in history have been triggered by travel and the interest in finding new cultures. The age of migration in the fourth and fifth centuries, the Crusades (1096–1291), the massive wave of pilgrimages in the late Middle Ages, the travel of Marco Polo and numerous Franciscan missionaries to the Mongolian court since the middle of the thirteenth century and then around 1300, the 'discovery' of America by Columbus

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<sup>56</sup> Sarah Stanbury, *Seeing the Gawain-Poet: Description and the Act of Perception*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); see also *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative*, ed. Laura L. Howes. Tennessee Studies in Literature, 43 (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2007).

<sup>57</sup> Bent Gebert, "Nel mezzo: Zur Räumlichkeit der Ich-Stimme in Dante's 'Vita Nova'," *Von sich selbst erzählen: Historische Dimensionen des Ich-Erzählens*, ed. Sonja Glauch and Katharina Philipowski. Studien zur Historischen Poetik, 26 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017), 277–306; here 286–93.



in 1492, Vasco da Gama's discovery of the route to India around South Africa in 1498, here not counting the countless war campaigns throughout that epoch – all of these have underscored the significance of movement of people which resulted in major paradigm shifts.

The research on pre-modern travel literature is legion by now, as touched upon above and as will be outlined further in the introductory section of my own contribution below, obviously because the large corpus of relevant texts sheds significant light on the way in which these various cultures, social groups, religious organizations delineate travel as a determining factor for time and space. We operate within both categories, as we can observe also with regard to conflicts, frictions, misunderstandings, and the universal experience of foreignness, the confrontation with 'the other.' This collection of articles intends to take a step forward by combining the experiences of travel with the observation of space in a wide range of documents and to reconceptualize the notions of movement and space in a more holistic fashion, embracing both categories as fundamental in their heuristic significance for all epistemology.

As scholarship has amply demonstrated, it amounts to a misnomer to regard the pre-modern world as immobile, as crystalline, as frozen in time because there were allegedly no roads or means of transportation, especially because people were afraid of moving to other locations, or because they did not have any opportunity to travel the way we enjoy today. Feudalism is quickly identified as the culprit of this alleged lack of development, holding the vast majority of the population as prisoners, bound to their arable land. Women were not supposed to move around much anyway; monks and nuns were bound by their vow to obey the principle of *stabilitas loci* and lived in their monastery for their entire life. Knights and merchants represent the exception to the rule, and sailors and craftsmen/artists made up only a small percentage of society at large. Many of the contributions to the present volume will undermine all those ill-conceived notions quite deftly and lay them to rest. Travel and mobility were central forces already in the medieval world, both in concrete, physical terms, and in the form of imagination, as reflected by travelogues, adventure romances such as *Herzog Ernst* (ca. 1180/1220), and proxy pilgrimage accounts, such as Felix Fabri's *Sionpilger* from 1492.

Of course, it proves to be an easy task to dismiss all those notions quickly as soon as we pay more attention to the sources as they have survived. In fact, from very early on, with the end of the Roman Empire, massive numbers of people were on the move, constituting the transformative age of migration. The age of the Crusades represented the next wave of enormous groups of individuals traveling far away from home to conquer and settle in the Holy Land, which lasted for almost two hundred years until 1291 when the last Christian fortress, Acre, fell to the Saracens/Muslims. Subsequently, pilgrimage gained in importance, as

hundreds of relevant accounts document most vividly.<sup>58</sup> It might be impossible to fathom entirely how the experience of the travel itself and in the foreign world impacted the authors who could not have returned home without having been deeply influenced by their observations, communications, contacts, and impressions.<sup>59</sup> We can be certain, however, that a pilgrimage, that is, the travel for religious purposes and toward a religious goal, transformed the space traversed and attributed a form of transcendence to it.<sup>60</sup>

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**58** Christian Hahn, *Deutsche Reiseberichte*. Europäische Reiseberichte des späten Mittelalters. Kieler Werkstücke. Reihe D: Beiträge zur europäischen Geschichte des späten Mittelalters, 5 (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2001); *Encyclopedia of Medieval Pilgrimage*, ed. Larissa J. Taylor, Leigh Ann Craig, et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010); Denys Pringle, *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, 1187–1291*. Crusade Texts in Translation (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012); see also the convenient text anthology, *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages: A Reader*, ed. Brett Edward Whalen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

**59** The case of the Lower Rhenish knight Arnold von Harff (1471–1505), who did not only leave behind an extensive travelogue of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land and then also to Santiago de Compostela, but also extensive word lists of the various languages that he encountered, serves our purposes well. While he visited the many different Christian pilgrimage sites, he was entirely ensconced in his Christian-European world view, but as soon as he entered Cairo, for instance, where he was completely outside of his familiar context, his perspective changed, especially with regard to his ability to perceive the foreign culture more objectively. *Zum Bild Ägyptens im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance / Comment se représente-t-on l'Égypte au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance?*, ed. Erik Hornung. Orbis biblicus et orientalis, 95 (Freiburg i. Ü., Switzerland: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990); Albrecht Classen, "Travel Space as Constructed Space: Arnold von Harff Observes the Arabic Space," *German Studies Review* 33.2 (2010): 375–88; id., "Traveler, Linguist, Pilgrim, Observer, and Scientist: Arnold von Harff Explores the Near East and Finds Himself Among Fascinating Foreigners," *Ain gut geboren edel man: A Festschrift for Winder McConnell on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Gary C. Shockey with Gail E. Finney and Clifford A. Bernd. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 757 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2011), 195–248; for a modern text edition, see *Rom – Jerusalem – Santiago: Das Pilgertagebuch des Ritters Arnold von Harff (1496–1498)*. Nach dem Text der Ausgabe von Eberhard von Groote übersetzt und eingeleitet von Helmut Brall-Tuchel und Folker Reichert (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2007); see also the contributions to *Wallfahrt und Kulturbeggnung: Das Rheinland als Ausgangspunkt und Ziel spätmittelalterlicher Pilgerreisen*, ed. Helmut Brall-Tuchel. Schriften des Heimatvereins der Erkelenzer Lande e.V., 26 (Erkelenz: Heimatverein der Erkelenzer Lande, 2012); Korvin Knop, *Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff 1496 – 1499: Im Kontext spätmittelalterlicher deutscher Reiseberichte – Pilgern, wandeln und entdecken* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2012).

**60** Münster, *Raum – Reise – Sinn* (see note 6), vol. 2, 35–36; *Unterwegs im Namen der Religion / On the Road in the Name of Religion: Pilgern als Form von Kontingenzbewältigung und Zukunftssicherung in den Weltreligionen / Pilgrimage as a Means of Coping with Contingency and Fixing the Future in the World's Major Religions*, ed. Klaus Herbers and Hans Christian Lehner (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014). The editor himself emphasizes how much pilgrimage has been an essential component of all religions across the world and throughout time, and addresses

Granted, preconceived notions have always been hard to dismantle, and travel by itself, especially when organized well in advance in such a way as to protect the traveler from confronting the reality on the ground, has never guaranteed epiphanic transformations, as the vast corpus of travelogues from the late Middle Ages (Marco Polo, Odorico da Pordenone, etc.) to the early modern age confirms extensively.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, as Romedio Schmitz-Esser now suggests, “Die bis zum Zusammenbruch des mongolischen Großreichs und zur Etablierung der Ming-Dynastie in China während des 15. Jahrhunderts enge Kommunikation zwischen dem Mittelmeerraum und Ostasien ermöglichte einen Austausch von Ideen, der eine Untersuchung von deren Einfluss auf das mittelalterliche Europa lohnt”<sup>62</sup> (The close communication between the Mediterranean and East Asia, which lasted until the collapse of the Mongolian Empire and the establishment of the Ming dynasty in China during the fifteenth century, made possible the exchange of ideas which would be worth an investigation for medieval Europe). Once linguistic hurdles will have been overcome and once the archives both in East and West will have granted more access to future scholars, we will probably have to rewrite our history books in light of a profound paradigm shift with respect to the global world in the pre-modern era.<sup>63</sup>

This proves to be quite true in many different contexts, also with regard to the third major wave of travelogues, those dealing with the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean toward the New World and then with the circumnavigation of the

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thereby also the “Mehrdimensionalität in der Räumlichkeit und der Körperbewegung” (8; multi dimensionality in the spatiality and in the movement of bodies).

**61** Mary B. Campbell, *Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing 400–1600* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1991); for the earlier history of how Europeans viewed the cosmos and geography, see Frank Schleicher, *Cosmographia Christiana: Kosmologie und Geographie im frühen Christentum* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014). We also have to dismiss the notion that the pre-modern world did not have a more global perspective; see the contributions to *Cosmopolitanism and the Middle Ages*, ed. John M. Ganim and Shayne Aaron Legassie. *The New Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

**62** Romedio Schmitz-Esser, “Odorich von Pordenone, Asienreiseberichte des Mittelalters und ihre ‘causa scribendi’,” *Mediaevistik* 30 (forthcoming, 2018); see also his contribution to the present volume.

**63** Alvise Andreose, *La strada, la Cina, il cielo. Studi sulla Relatio di Odorico da Pordenone e sulla sua fortuna romanza*. Medioevo Romanzo e Orientale. Studi, 17 (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2012). As to the perception of the Mongols in the West, see Felicitas Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden: Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert*. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters, 16 (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1994); and Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410*. *The Medieval World* (2005; London and New York: Routledge, 2014); Michael Brauer, “Zwischen Tradition und Erleben: Europäische Reiseberichte über die Mongolen,” *Welterfahrung und Welterschließung* (see note 35), 69–88.

southern African continent in order to reach the Indian sub-continent.<sup>64</sup> The year 1492 might have been a literal ‘watershed,’ at least with respect to the new relationship between Europe and the Americas,<sup>65</sup> but Arabic, Indian, and Chinese travelers had already embarked on extensive travels by water and land since the early Middle Ages, even if the contacts between East and West were not yet fully developed. The issue thus centers on the question to what extent we can observe the phenomenon of globalization already in the Middle Ages, that is, whether and how people in the pre-modern world perceived the cultures, religions, political systems, and political powers not only within the European or only within the Chinese domain, but recognized and embraced global perspectives.<sup>66</sup> Both

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**64** Urs Bitterli, *Die Entdeckung Amerikas: Von Kolumbus bis Alexander von Humboldt* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1991); Philip P. Boucher, *Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492–1763*. Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture (Baltimore, MD, and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Imaginative Landscape of Christopher Columbus* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Anthony Grafton, with April Shelford and Nancy Siraisi, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992); José Rabasa, *Inventing America: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism*. Oklahoma Project for Discourse and Theory (Norman, OK, and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993). The literature on this topic, particularly produced around the quincentenary of the ‘discovery’ of America, is legion, of course.

**65** See the catalog for an exhibit: *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration*, ed. Jay A. Levenson (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1991); Edwin G. Beal, “Concerning Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus: The Pipino Version,” *Journal of East Asian Libraries* 101 (December 1993): 151–60; cf. also the studies by Robert S. Lopez, *Su e giù per la storia di Genova* (Genoa: Istituto di paleografia e storia medievale, 1975).

**66** *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200–1300)*, ed. Igor de Rachewiltz et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993); Edward Dreyer and Zheng He, *China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty 1405–1438* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007); Hyun Hee Park, *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). For the famous Arabic traveler Ibn Fadlān, see *Ibn Fadlān and the Land of Darkness: Arab Travellers in the Far North*, trans. with an intro. by Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone (London: Penguin Books, 2012). See also the contribution to the present volume by Sally Abed. I cannot claim here to be an expert on the vast history of East Asian travel and travel literature; instead, see *Traditions of East Asian Travel*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006); *Marco Polo and the Encounter of East and West*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Amilcare Iannucci, with the assistance of John Tulk (Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 2008); for the later centuries, see Geoffrey C. Gunn, *First Globalization: The Eurasian Exchange, 1500–1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003). See also Johannes Fried, “Gedanken und Perspektiven zur Globalisierung im Mittelalter,” *Europa in der Welt des Mittelalters: Ein Colloquium für und mit Michael Borgolte*, ed. Tillmann Lohse and Benjamin Scheller (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 211–39. As to the theoretical reflection on globalization in the Middle Ages, see the contribution to this volume by Romedio Schmitz-Esser.

continents were certainly on the move during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and beyond, and expanded vastly in terms of commercial, political, military, and also artistic exchanges, though the true extent of contacts across the globe was probably rather slim, despite all the efforts by the Franciscan missionaries and those by Marco Polo and his companions to reach out to the foreign people in east Asia.<sup>67</sup>

At any rate, we are in the midst of new research, and it is highly likely that we will be able to confirm much closer contacts between the East and the West, or the North and the South, than we have previously assumed.<sup>68</sup> However, whatever the future insights might tell us, the philosophical framework will not change insofar as both the experience of time and space in their transformative power will remain as essential forces in the continuous process of the history of mentality and everyday culture, and then also the history of xenology. We are, as individuals, bound by the interdependence of both forces and shape our own environment just as much as we in turn determine them as well through our actions, ideas, words, and material culture. It remains to be seen what the literary, historical, and other documents reflecting the contacts between East and West will tell us once we have applied innovative theoretical tools to understand them better. One aspect, however, is certain already now. When Marco Polo or Odorico da Pordenone went

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67 Christopher Dawson, *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the 13th and 14th Centuries*. The Makers of Christendom (1955; New York: AMS Press, 1980); *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253–1255*, trans. Peter Jackson. Introduction, notes and appendices by Peter Jackson with David Morgan. The Hakluyt Society, Ser. 2, 173 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990); Odorico da Pordenone, “Relatio de Mirabilibus Orientalium Tatarorum,” ed. Annalia Marchisio. Edizione nazionale dei testi mediolatini d’Italia, Serie I, 23, 41 (Florence: Sismel – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2016); Stewart Gordon, *When Asia Was the World: Traveling Merchants, Scholars, Warriors, and Monks Who Created the “Riches of the East”* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2008); Folker Reichert, *Asien und Europa im Mittelalter. Studien zur Geschichte des Reisens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); see also Margaret Kim, “Globalizing Imperium: Thirteenth-Century Perspectives on the Mongols,” *Literature Compass* 11.7 (2014): 472–83; Kathryn A. Montalbano, “Misunderstanding the Mongols: Intercultural Communication in Three Thirteenth-Century Franciscan Travel Accounts,” *Information & Culture* 50.4 (Fall 2015): 588–610. See also the contribution to this volume by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. For an economic approach to globalization since the late Middle Ages, see *Globalisierung in der Geschichte: Erträge der 23. Arbeitstagung der Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte vom 1. bis 21. März 2009 n Kiel*, ed. Rolf Walter. Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Beihefte, 214 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011). However, Hendrik Mäkelar, “Globalisierter Handel um die Jahrtausendwende? Die Ausdehnung des wikingerzeitlichen Handelsraums,” *ibidem*, 15–45, rightly claims that the world of the Vikings must already be viewed through the lens of globalization.

68 Romedio Schmitz-Esser, “The Orb of the World. European Expansion and Medieval World-view,” *Ligabue Magazine* 66 (2015): 156–71.

East, they left behind their old world which they never encountered again even after their return because things had simply changed back there as well. They moved through time and space and thus impacted human history profoundly, especially after they had composed their reports about their experiences, both with their contemporaries in the Mongolian Empire, on their travel routes toward their goal and back, and subsequently with their audiences back home in Italy and the rest of Europe. Each travel author allows the reader/listener to experience different spaces because the narrative transports the individual into unseen and distant locations, often also in other times.

In this process of traveling or exploring spaces, the basic element of curiosity finds its full response, as countless literary narratives, such as those focusing on the deeds and accomplishments by Alexander the Great, popular throughout the Middle Ages, illustrate most impressively. His military triumphs, conquering the entire Persian empire and many other kingdoms up to India, his countless discoveries of monsters and giant people, of magical beings and exotic animals, not to forget his scientific investigations of the spaces up in the air and underneath the sea surface, consistently intrigued medieval and also early modern audiences.<sup>69</sup> Undoubtedly, by contrast, the representatives of the Catholic Church, since the time of the Desert Fathers (Paul of Thebes, Anthony the Great, etc.) and the Church Fathers (Tertullian, Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo, and others), argued consistently that a good Christian should focus on his/her soul alone, and not on the body and physical experiences.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, both the historical documents and the literary witnesses from the early Middle Ages onward confirm that travel was very much on the mind of many people, either for religious or for mercantile reasons, not to mention the peripatetic monarchy especially in England and

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<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Pfafe Lambrecht, *Alexanderroman: Mittelhochdeutsch / Neuhochdeutsch*, ed., trans., and commentary by Elisabeth Lienert (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2007); see also the contributions to *Alexanderdichtungen im Mittelalter: Kulturelle Selbstbestimmung im Kontext literarischer Beziehungen*, ed. Jan Cölln, Susanne Friede, and Hartmut Wulfram. Veröffentlichungen aus dem Göttinger Sonderforschungsbereich 529 "Internationalität nationaler Literaturen", 1 (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2000); *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Zachary D. Zuwiyya. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 29 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> This notion, its sharp criticism by the Catholic Church, and the broader discourse on curiosity have been discussed numerous times; see, for instance, Christian K. Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-Century England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976); Hans G. Voss and Heidi Keller, *Curiosity and Exploration: Theories and Results* (New York: Academic Press, 1983); Hans Blumenberg, *Der Prozess der theoretischen Neugierde*, expanded and rev. ed., 4th ed. (1984; Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1988); Gunther Bös, *Curiositas: die Rezeption eines antiken Begriffes durch christliche Autoren bis Thomas von Aquin* (Paderborn, Munich, et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1995).

the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>71</sup> Significantly, already then it did not matter crucially whether the travel was based on real experiences (Marco Polo) or imaginary, with one's pretense of having witnessed the exotic Orient with one's own eyes.<sup>72</sup> Considering the on-going popularity of travel, which actually was soon to comprise much larger territories, distances, and hence spaces, the traditional attempt to create period boundaries between the Middle Ages and the early modern world (Renaissance/Protestant Reformation) proves to be increasingly problematic.<sup>73</sup> The critical question as to how people have viewed the wider world when they embarked on journeys for many different reasons continued to be fundamental also in the early and modern world/literature. In fact, a vast majority of our current canon mirrors this ongoing fascination with time and space, both being fundamental criteria for all identity formation, as Stephan Günzel now outlines in his philosophical investigation of space, in which he draws heavily from Martin Heidegger's and Henri Lefebvre's concepts and differentiates between "Raumpraxis (pratique spatiale), Raumrepräsentation (représentations de l'espace) und Repräsentationsräume (espaces de représentation)."<sup>74</sup> However, no investigation of space, hence of travel, makes sense without keeping in mind the dimension of

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71 Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1988); see also the contributions to *Reisen und Reiseliteratur im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Xenja von Ertzdorff and Dieter Neukirch. Chloe, Beihefte zum Daphnis, 13 (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1992); cf. also Marina Münkler, *Erfahrung des Fremden* (see note 2).

72 John Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1999); *Marco Polo and the Encounter of East and West*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Amilcare Iannucci (see note 66); Albrecht Classen, "Marco Polo and John Mandeville: The Traveler as Authority Figure, the Real and the Imaginary," *Authorities in the Middle Ages: Influence, Legitimacy, and Power in Medieval Society*, ed. Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola, and Tuija Aionen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 12 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 239–48. See also the contribution to this volume by Romedio Schmitz-Esser.

73 *Erkundung und Beschreibung der Welt: Zur Poetik der Reise- und Länderberichte. Vorträge eines interdisziplinären Symposiums vom 19. bis 24. Juni 2000 an der Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen*, ed. Xenja von Ertzdorff and Gerhard Gieseemann, together with Rudolf Schulz. Chloe. Beihefte zum Daphnis, 34 (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2003); see also the contributions to *Shipping, Trade and Crusade in the Medieval Mediterranean: Studies in Honour of John Pryor*, ed. Ruthy Gertwagen and Elizabeth Jeffreys (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

74 Stephan Günzel, *Raum: Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Einführung*. Edition Kulturwissenschaft 143 (Bielefeld: Transcript – Verlag für Kommunikation, Kultur und soziale Praxis 2017); the quote is from Fabian Kirchherr's review online in the *H-Soz-Kult* network, Dec. 19, 2017. For much more practical investigations, see also the contributions to *Spanische Städte und Landschaften in der deutschen (Reise)literatur / Ciudades y paisajes españoles en la literatura (de viajes) alemana*, ed. Berta Raposo and Walther L. Bernecker. Medien – Literaturen – Sprachen in Anglistik / Amerikanistik, Germanistik und Romanistik, 23 (Frankfurt a. M., Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 2017).

time. After all, every action in human life is predicated on a development which takes place in space and time, for which travel is only the most explicit expression. At closer analysis, however, all three criteria demonstrate their true nature of being contingent on the various situations in which they evolve, and where they unfold depending on the concept to be outlined by the authors. Travel and space can be viewed both concretely in their material condition, or as metaphorical and imaginary.<sup>75</sup>

Many medieval travelogues or pilgrimage accounts served to replace material travel with reading experiences because the audience, such as nuns or monks, were not allowed to leave their site, such as Felix Fabri's *Sionspilger* (1492), or they were written by armchair travel authors such as John Mandeville (late fourteenth century).<sup>76</sup> Life in a monastery proves to be certainly very different from the life outside in the secular existence, and hence time and space are correspondingly experienced differently as well.<sup>77</sup>

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75 See the contributions to *Journeying Along Medieval Routes in Europe and the Middle East*, ed. Alison L. Gascoigne, Leonie V. Hicks, and Marianne O'Doherty. *Medieval Voyaging*, 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), and especially the introduction by the editors, 1–22; here 2. Cf. also the contributions to *Freedom of Movement in the Middle Ages*, ed. Peregrine Horden. *Harlaxton Medieval Studies*, 15 (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007); and to *Relations, échange, transferts en Occident au cours des derniers siècles du Moyen Âge: hommage à Werner Paravicini; actes du colloque de Paris (4–6 décembre 2008)*, ed. Bernard Guenée and Jean-Marie Moeglin (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2010). See also Daniel K. Connolly, *The Maps of Matthew Paris: Medieval Journey Through Space, Time and Liturgy* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: Boydell, 2009).

76 Kathryn Beebe, *Pilgrim and Preacher: The Audiences and Observant Spirituality of Friar Felix Fabri (1437/8–1502)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Albrecht Classen, "Imaginary Experience of the Divine: Felix Fabri's *Sionspilger* – Late-Medieval Pilgrimage Literature as a Window into Religious Mentality," *Studies in Spirituality* 15 (2005): 109–28. See especially the contribution to this volume by Gavin Fort who focuses on late medieval English proxy travels arranged through last wills.

77 Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds. Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); cf. also the famous studies by Erich Auerbach, *Time, History, and Literature: Selected Essays of Erich Auerbach*, ed. and with an intro. by James I. Porter; trans. by Jane O. Newman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); cf. also, for anthropological perspectives, Nicholas Thomas, *Out of Time: History and Evolution in Anthropological Discourse* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996); for time and space in the Middle Ages, see the contributions to *Time: Sense, Space, Structure*, ed. Nancy Van Deusen and Leonard Michael Koff. *Presenting the Past*, 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2016); *Materiality and Time: Historical Perspectives on Organizations, Artefacts and Practices*, ed. Francois-Xavier de Vaujany, Nathalie Mitev, Pierre Laniray, and Emmanuelle Vaast. *Technology, Work and Globalization* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); for market-oriented concepts of time management, see Marcelo Bucheli and R. Daniel Wadhvani, *Organizations in Time: History, Theory, Methods*



Not surprisingly, in much of all philosophical discourse from Plato down to the present time, the very nature of time has been examined from many different perspectives. According to Ned Markosian,

[h]istorically, two main arguments have played the biggest roles in convincing people [that time does not exist independently without the events that occur in time]. One is conceptual: time, according to this argument, is by definition nothing more than a system of temporal relations among things and events, so that the idea of a period of time without change turns out to be incoherent. The other main argument for Reductionism is epistemological: we could never have any reason, according to this argument, to posit a period of empty time; and, moreover, even if there were such a period, we would not have any way of knowing about either its existence or its length.<sup>78</sup>

Ned Markosian consequently highlights that

According to The B Theory, time is very much like the dimensions of space. Just as there are no genuine spatial properties (like being north), but, rather, only two-place, spatial relations (like north of), so too, according to the B Theorist, there are no genuine A properties. According to The A Theory, on the other hand, time is very different from the dimensions of space. For even though there are no genuine spatial properties like being north, there are, according to the A Theorist, genuine A properties; and time, unlike space, can truly be said to pass, according to The A Theory.

There is another important respect in which some (but not all) A Theorists believe time to be unlike the dimensions of space. Some A Theorists believe that there are crucial ontological differences between time and the dimensions of space. For some A Theorists also endorse a view known as “Presentism,” and others endorse a view that we will call “The Growing Universe Theory.”<sup>79</sup>

To illustrate the challenges that we are facing here in the collective project of our volume, and to gain more solid textual ground, taking us back to the Middle Ages and the early modern age, let us examine, at least one example with many levels of meaning, the medieval Welsh *Mabinogi*, consisting of four relatively

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(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); for the tension between monastic and secular time, see specifically the contribution to this volume by Lisa M. C. Weston.

<sup>78</sup> Ned Markosian, “Time,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2002; rev. 2011, online at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/time/> (last accessed on Dec. 2, 2017).

<sup>79</sup> Markosian, “Time” (see note 78); see also the famous study by Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (London: Bantam, 1988); Arie Ben-Naim, *The Briefest History of Time: The History of Histories of Time and the Misconstrued Association between Entropy and Time* (New Jersey [sic], London, Singapore, et al.: World Scientific, 2016). All this, however, quickly takes us into modern astrophysics and the philosophy of time. See also Joseph S. Flipper, *Between Apocalypse and Eschaton: History and Eternity in Henri de Lubac* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015).

independent parts composed sometime in the late eleventh or twelfth century, which have survived in two fourteenth-century manuscripts.<sup>80</sup>

The purpose at hand cannot be to offer a comprehensive analysis; instead, here I only want to highlight a few features that shed important light on our discussion of time, space, and identity, which are all deeply questioned by the poet in the treatment of Prince Sage (Puryll) of Dyfed. One day, while out hunting, he encounters a mysterious stag that is pursued by a band of oddly colored dogs, which quickly capture and kill their prey. As is often the case in medieval and early modern literature, during an ordinary activity at an unexpected moment, the unusual, wondrous, miraculous, or simply ‘the Other’ appears and disrupts the protagonist’s life – see, for instance, the famous fountain scene in Chrétien de Troyes’s *Erec* (ca. 1160) or Hartmann von Aue’s eponymous romance (ca. 1170). This is also the case here because the white-skinned dogs with red ears belong to a stranger knight, who comes rushing out of the forest and protests vehemently against Sage’s rude behavior of having driven his own dogs away from the carcass, allowing his own dogs to feed on it.

As it turns out, the stranger is the King of the Otherworld, Arawn, who at first badly lambasts Sage for his uncouth behavior, but then accepts his offer to redeem himself. This can happen only if Sage forms an alliance with him and switches places. Since Arawn knows magic, he can transform Sage into looking exactly like him and taking on Sage’s figure. No one at the respective courts recognizes the ploy and simply enjoy the government of their lords who both perform exceedingly well. Sage manages to defeat Arawn’s enemy, King Summerbright (or Hafgan), who dies from his wounds, and he rules the country very successfully. After the year has passed, both men meet again, and Arawn mutates both back into their original form. As they then realize soon, once they have returned home, Sage had never even touched or looked at Arawn’s wife, observing complete chastity, while Arawn had exerted an ideal form of government. Both men then understand the high standards of ethical behavior demonstrated by the respective other, and they strike a deep and lasting friendship, allowing them thus to overcome the difference and distance between this and the Otherworld.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, ed. and trans. by Matthieu Boyd, with the modernization assistance of Stacie Lents (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2017); see also the historical-critical edition, *The Mabinogi*, ed. Proinsias Mac Cana (1977; Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992); *The Mabinogian Tetralogy*, ed. Evangeline Walton, intro. by Betty Ballantine (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2002); Andrew Breeze, *The Origins of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2009).

<sup>81</sup> This would be a topic of great interest, the development and manifestation of friendship over distance, time, and across life and death. See the contributions to *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse*, ed. Albrecht Classen

However, the protagonist then has another mysterious encounter with a figure from the other world, a lady who is trying to attract his attention but allows no man to come close to her until Sage himself follows her and calls out to her (24). But problems then arise during the wedding feast a year later, during which a stranger appears and asks the prince for a favor, which he grants, giving his blanket promise, although the stranger then turns out to be the man who had been promised the miraculous woman, Rhiannon. From then on, the narrative follows the path into the miraculous, fantastic, and imaginary, with the protagonists moving back and forth and struggling hard to determine their own course of action.

This phenomenon is very characteristic of countless other medieval and early modern narratives where the individual is challenged, leaves home, experiences problems, fights hard, might be defeated, then overcomes all opposition and returns home triumphantly, such as in scores of Arthurian romances. Time and space matter significantly here insofar as the protagonist transgresses both, moving back and forth successfully, freely operating with these two categories, as the B Theory proponents have outlined (Ned Markosian).

In heroic epics, such as *El poema de mio Cid* (twelfth century) or in the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200) travel and space through time emerge as central features and allow the poet to develop his text most dramatically. It is always the same experience of time and movement which build the framework for the quest for identity, which at times ends in death for all, such as in the latter case. In the former, the opposite is the case, and Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar is able both to overcome and defeat his opponents, the Infantes de Carrión, and to regain his honor, that is, the king's high estimation, which allows him to rise to the highest position in Spain just below the king. The epic poem is centrally determined by El Cid's constant move from place to place and his waging war against various opponents, until he has achieved the greatest victory, gaining Valencia as his seat of power.

These observations find their confirmation in other literary genres as well. In the *Chanson de Roland* (ca. 1160) or in the corresponding *Rolandslied* by Priest Konrad (ca. 1180) the protagonist is trying to get out of Spain, leading Charlemagne's rear guard, when he is attacked by the Muslims who have ambushed him in the Valle de Roncevalle, after Genelon/Genelun has betrayed him to the

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and Marilyn Sandidge. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 6 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010); as to the tension, or rather collaboration, between this and the other world, see Kate Chadbourne, "Otherworlds and Innerworlds," *Parabola: Myth, Tradition, and the Search for Meaning (ParabolaM)* 29.4 (2004): 64–69; see also Philip Freeman, *Celtic Mythology: Tales of Gods, Goddesses, and Heroes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

enemies. The subsequent battle leads to the death of all the Christian warriors, but Charlemagne arrives, having called back by his nephew by means of his powerful horn, and takes revenge. Roland's triumph, however, which he has to pay with the death of all of his men, his compatriots, and of himself, is deeply marked by the narrow mountain pass where the final battle takes place. In other words, we do not need to look only at medieval and early travelogues to identify relevant comments on travel, time, and space; instead, we find significant comments on the correlation between all those three elements in many other texts as well.<sup>82</sup> I would not go so far as Shayne Aaron Legassie according to whom most medieval travel accounts were the results of the projection of travel as labor, hence of self-fashioning, and that hence medieval travelers were regarded with "envy and scorn."<sup>83</sup> Travel has never been an activity of simple leisure, but those who commanded enough resources could always proceed in a much more comfortable fashion when traveling than those with less means at hand. While some people who came back from long travel were certainly envied, there is little reason to assume that they all met envy or contempt. In fact, the opposite seems to have been the case as the vast corpus of relevant travel literature and correlated genres indicates.

Pilgrimage was a mass phenomenon, and the few critical opinions that were raised in some literary texts do not provide sufficient evidence that pilgrims' tales were severely disparaged.<sup>84</sup> The very existence of a vast corpus of relevant travelogues underscores that dismissive remarks were simply part of the game and part of the genre since every pilgrim faced the challenge to demonstrate the sincerity of his or her enterprise, as is richly illustrated by the case of the English mystic Margery Kempe (ca. 1373–after 1438).<sup>85</sup> In her case, however, the issue was

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<sup>82</sup> See the many different observations offered by Uta Störmer-Caysa, *Grundstrukturen* (see note 44). I wonder, however, whether the contrast between medieval and modern narratives regarding their treatment of the time-space continuum can be upheld as strongly as she suggests (238). In *The Mabinogi* there is no doubt about the exact time, that is, one year, which has to pass before an agreement has to expire, or before an event, such as a feast, will take place. Störmer-Caysa summarizes her analysis as follows: "Raum und Landschaft sind im mittelalterlichen Roman nicht ontologisch früher als der Held, nicht schon als vorhanden gedacht, ehe der Protagonist überhaupt auftaucht, sondern gleichrangig mit ihm und mit seiner Bewegung verwandlungsfähig" (Ontologically speaking, in medieval romances space and landscape are not imagined as having existed before the appearance of the protagonist. They are of equal rank and can transform in conjunction with his movements).

<sup>83</sup> Shayne Aaron Legassie, *The Medieval Invention of Travel* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), ix.

<sup>84</sup> Legassie, *The Medieval Invention* (see note 83), 6.

<sup>85</sup> Kathleen Ashley, "Historicizing Margery: *The Book of Margery Kempe* as Social Text," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28:2 (1998): 371–88; Albrecht Classen, *The Power of*

not so much the pilgrimage itself, but the fact that she traveled as a woman, often by herself because her group shunned her out of embarrassment over her strange behavior. Nevertheless, Kempe reached all of her goals, and safely returned home, having transcended all her previous limitations of time and space, both having taken in the various sacred spaces for her own religious experience and having crossed over, at least in spiritual terms, into sacred time.

At any rate, both specific travelogues/pilgrimage accounts and literary and religious texts that entail reflections on time, space, and movement alert us to the great need to consider pre-modern narratives as valuable evidence for the constant struggle of people throughout times to come to terms with those complex coordinates that determine their existence. Simply put, and this applies to our modern world as well, neither time nor space are absolutely firm entities; instead, people construct them and change them according to their own perceptions and needs. Of course, space itself is not the result of construction in the narrow sense; but we recognize it by way of our cultural criteria; otherwise it does not seem to be there, at least for human rational thought, as already early medieval documents indicate.<sup>86</sup> Both time and space become comprehensible through narratives, either literary or historiographical, clerical or scientific, as modern theoreticians such as Michel de Certeau, Pierre Bourdieu, and Yi-Fu Tuan have clearly outlined for us. Dream visions, for instance, which also often involve space travels, have always signaled that the constraints of time and space are physical entities, and can easily be overcome through imagination and dreams.<sup>87</sup> This becomes most

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*a Woman's Voice in Medieval and Early Modern Literatures: New Approaches to German and European Women Writers and to Violence Against Women in Premodern Times.* Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 271–308. See now the contribution to this volume by Lia Ross.

**86** Nicole Guenther Discenza, *Inhabited Spaces: Anglo-Saxon Constructions of Place*. Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series, 23 (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

**87** Albrecht Classen, "Dreams in the Middle Ages – Meaningful Experiences from the Past for Our Future?," *The Living Pulpit* (forthcoming); although this is not a scholarly journal, I had the opportunity to publish this piece there upon invitation, and so had the chance to reflect more broadly on the issue as it pertains to us here. For further insights on dreams in the Middle Ages, see Jesse Keskiäho, *Dreams and Visions in the Early Middle Ages*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought. Fourth Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); *Dreams and Visions: An Interdisciplinary Enquiry*, ed. Nancy van Deusen. Presenting the Past, 2 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010); Gabriela Cerghedeian, *Dreams in the Western Literary Tradition with Special Reference to Medieval Spain* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006); Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 14 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Albrecht Classen, "Transpositions of Dreams to Reality in Middle High German Narratives," *Shifts and Transpositions in Medieval Narratives: a festschrift for Dr Elspeth Kenned* (Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 1994); *Träume im Mittelalter*:

evident during travel, irrespective of the cultural framework, when the individual realizes that spaces change while s/he traverses time on the goal to a distant destiny.<sup>88</sup> Such a movement reminds the individual of his/her own identity in space and time and opens windows toward the cosmic place of the individual.<sup>89</sup> Armchair travelers such as John Mandeville (late fourteen century) offer best illustrations of the great opportunity which imagination offers, transcending all limitations of physical materiality.<sup>90</sup>

Even Legassie is now willing to admit that medieval travelers to the Holy Land were not simply following a prescribed and firm route that would have blocked their view from the actual sites. As he comments, “medieval travel writers developed a number of approaches to unearthing evidence and evaluating competing claims about the Holy Land.”<sup>91</sup> Travel thus emerges as a profoundly important

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*ikonologische Studien*, ed. Agostino Paravicini Bagliani and Giorgio Stabile (Stuttgart: Belser, 1989).

**88** Horst F. Rupp, “Heiliger Raum: Kirche (evangelisch),” *Handbuch der Religionen*, ed. Michael Klöcker and Udo Tworuschka. 53. Ergänzungslieferung (Bamberg: Mediengruppe Oberfranken – Fachverlage GmbH & Co. KG, 2017), 1–37.

**89** See the review of Diszenza’s book, *Inhabited Spaces* (see note 86), by Emily V. Thornbury, online in *The Medieval Review* 17.10.30. She highlights: “Diszenza’s analysis shows a drive in Anglo-Saxon literature to convert spaces into places via a series of methods – above all, through narrative. At the same time, even in its forms least accessible to humans, space for the Anglo-Saxons was never wholly chaotic. Diszenza identifies a dynamic of ‘order and plenitude’ in early English writings, in which rational, often divinely-constituted systems controlled the proliferation of life that suffused the Anglo-Saxons’ universe.” These insights can have many consequences for our understanding of time, space, and movement in the subsequent centuries.

**90** Iain Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: The “Travels” of Sir John Mandeville*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). For the long-lasting impact of this fantasy writing, see Ladan Niayesh, *A Knight’s Legacy: Mandeville and Mandevillian Lore in Early Modern England*. Manchester Medieval Literature and Culture (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2011). See also the contributions to *Knowledge in Motion: Constructing Transcultural Experience in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods (1200–1750)*, ed. Gerhild Scholz Williams and Christian Schneider. Daphnis, 45.3–4 (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2017). Most of the papers deal with the early modern period, but the theoretical underpinnings presented here are pertinent for our argument here. See, however, Markus Stock, “Knowledge, Hybridity, and the King of the Crane-Heads: Herzog Ernst B, Herzog Ernst G, and the *Forchheim Crane-Head*” (391–411), who focuses on this highly popular adventure romance originally composed ca. 1170/1180 (ms. A) and then ca. 1220 (ms. B), in which travel matters centrally.

**91** Legassie, *The Medieval Invention* (see note 83), 14. He also remarks that pilgrims quickly learned (and admitted) that their travel was fraught with many worries and hardships, transforming the pilgrimage itself into labor (162). However, neither then nor today has pilgrimage been easy, as anyone who has walked or driven the Sendero de Compostella would confirm. For this specific pilgrimage route, among many others, see Irene M Franck and David M Brownstone, *To the Ends of the Earth: The Great Travel and Trade Routes of Human History* (New York: Facts on

epistemological process that ultimately results in the creation of a “Book of the World,” a constructed space discovered by means of the pilgrim’s or traveler’s movement. In Legassie’s words, “It is only through great discipline and effort that the pilgrim succeeds in imprinting the Holy Land (both chapter and verse) onto the pages of memory’s tome.”<sup>92</sup>

Even though Arnold Gehlen identified human existence through a reference to a strong sense of being part of the entire world, “Weltoffenheit,” meaning that humans are not subject to a physical specialization, as most animals and other creatures are and can thus adapt to virtually all possible life conditions,<sup>93</sup> travel still represents a major transgression, the departure from the familiar world and the exploration of a foreign one. This has always been scary and dangerous, but the lure to discover the foreign, to reach the Holy Land, and to learn about new things has always driven individuals to endeavor such undertaking. After all, to visit the site where a saint had lived and worked miracles, or to go to places where Christ Himself had died, or to pray at a location where a saint had left his or her mark has always represented the startling blending of heaven and earth in the concrete here and now. As Reinhold Münster notes, we are dealing with the phenomenon of “A-Chronie” (Non-Time, or Outside of Time), and the merging of time and space in an epiphanic moment when the transcendental suddenly becomes accessible and tangible once again.<sup>94</sup>

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File, 1984); for the route to Santiago specifically, see Robert Brian Tate, *Pilgrimages to St. James of Compostella from the British Isles During the Middle Ages*. E. Allison Peers Publications, 4 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1990); Conrad Rudolph, *Pilgrimage to the End of the World: The Road to Santiago de Compostela* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Kathleen M Ashley and Marilyn Deegan, *Being a Pilgrim: Art and Ritual on the Medieval Routes to Santiago* (Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Lund Humphries, 2009); Edward F. Stanton, *Road of Stars to Santiago* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015); James Harpur, *The Pilgrim Journey: A History of Pilgrimage in the Western World* (Oxford: Lion Books, an imprint of Lion Hudson plc, 2016).

<sup>92</sup> Legassie, *The Medieval Invention* (see note 83), 101 and 102.

<sup>93</sup> Gehler, *Der Mensch* (1940); quoted from Rolf Darge, “Wahre Welt: Die Welt als offenes Beziehungsfeld des menschlichen Geistes im mittelalterlichen Denken,” *Welterfahrung und Welterschließung in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (see note 35), 25–45; here 44.

<sup>94</sup> Reinhold Münster, “Abenteuer erleben auf dem Camino de Santiago: Das Sachbuch als Bestseller,” *Bestseller – gestern und heute: Ein Blick vom Rand zum Zentrum der Literaturwissenschaft / Bestseller – Yesterday and Today: A Look from the Margin to the Center of Literary Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Eva Parra Membrives. Popular Fiction Studies, 2 (Tübingen: Narr, 2016), 134–48; here 137. Curiously, after a long hiatus since the late Middle Ages, the cult of Saint Jacob and his veneration in Santiago de Compostela regained its popularity only by the end of the twentieth century, and today the Camino de Santiago is once again crowded with pilgrims coming from all over the world. The quest for the saintly, or apophatic, element continues to lure thousands of people every year, so we might consider the modern search for identity and meaning

This volume, however, is not primarily concerned with the history of travel and travel literature, although the corpus of relevant documents is legion. Instead, as I have indicated already earlier, the central issue of the collected articles focuses on the triangular relationship between time, space, and hence travel, which entails that we need to study human space and time awareness, the critical assessment of both, and the subsequent movement through space, which takes time, and which transports the individual to a different world. Epistemologically speaking, the contributors to this volume will explore the issue of world recognition or world knowledge, either in spatial or in temporal terms, and ultimately the epistemological question regarding the process of identity formation and the establishment of culture in time and space.

In a way, we also continue with the theoretical and methodological approach outlined already several decades ago by Nelson Goodman in his study *Ways of Worldmaking* (1978), in which he heavily draws from Ernst Cassirer's (1874–1945) concepts of myth making.<sup>95</sup> Nelson observes, for instance, “Repetition as well

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as surprisingly parallel to the situation in the late Middle Ages. I would disagree with Münster's conclusion, however, that the modern pilgrim no longer searches for God and seeks redemption through himself, that most pilgrims go on their long trek out of purely touristic reasons, or because they want to leave their normal life temporarily behind and experience an alternative situation once again. For him, the modern pilgrims simply seek a form of escapism away from modern civilization (145–46). This might be the case for a good number of those travelers, but if they aimed for that goal they could easily find much more excitement in different locals all over the world. We should not simply dismiss religious devotion, the desire to experience the route to the saint's relic personally and physically, and the spiritual transformation of the individual after having hiked hundreds, if not thousands of miles under rather difficult conditions, as a major motivation for the individual. We might also assume that even a rather worldly oriented pilgrim to Santiago could witness an unexpected transcendence in him/herself in the course of time on the road. Pilgrimage has, after all, very much to do with the way, and not so much with the goal. It is the activity itself that matters, not the desire to reach the end of the trip as fast as possible. Pilgrimage is a ritual in and through travel.

<sup>95</sup> Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis, IN; Hackett, 1978). For numerous responses to his ideas, see the contributions to *Worldmaking*, ed. William Pencak. *Critic of Institutions*, 6. (New York: Peter Lang, 1996); *Cultural Ways of Worldmaking: Media and Narratives*, ed. Vera Nünning, Ansgar Nünning, and Birgit Neumann, in collaboration with Mirjam Horn. *Concepts for the Study of Culture*, 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010); Sisse Siggaard Jensen, *Ways of Virtual World-Making: Actors and Avatars* (Frederiksberg: Roskilde University Press, 2012). As to the direct application of the notion of ‘worldmaking’ in the early modern age, see Elizabeth Spiller, *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature: The Art of Making Knowledge, 1580–1670* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). As to contemporary applications in cultural studies, see the contributions to *Worldmaking: Literature, Language, Culture*, ed. Tom Clark, Emily Finlay, Philippa Kelly. *FILLM Studies in Languages and Literatures*, 5 (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017).



as identification is relative to organization. A world may be unmanageably heterogenous or unbearably monotonous according to how events are sorted into kinds" (9). Then: "Worlds not differing in entities or emphasis may differ in ordering; for example, the worlds of different constructional systems differ in order of derivation" (12). But without the human impact, there would not be any specific perception at all: "All measurement, furthermore, is based upon order. Indeed, only through suitable arrangements and groupings can we handle vast quantities of material perceptually or cognitively" (13–14). Truth, however, does not necessarily emerge in that process because it all depends on the receiver of truth claims and the system where those claims are made: "a version is taken to be true when it offends no unyielding beliefs and none of its own precepts" (17). However, we might also have to question Nelson's global assumption that

Truth, moreover, pertains solely to what is said, and literal truth solely to what is said literally. We have seen, though, that worlds are made not only by what is said literally but also by what is said metaphorically, and not only by what is said either literally or metaphorically but also by what is exemplified and expressed – by what is shown as well as by what is said (18).

Could we hence agree that everything we observe is the result of constructionism, a rather problematic position? Nelson states explicitly: "This world, indeed, is the one most often taken as real; for reality in a world, like realism in a picture, is largely a matter of habit" (20). And finally, as he suggests, "if worlds are as much made as found, so also knowing is as much remaking as reporting. All the processes of worldmaking I have discussed enter into knowledge. Perceiving motion, we have seen, often consists in producing it" (22). Much of world travel literature might support such notions, constantly hovering between a mimetic representation of the world as witnessed on the travel and the image of the world as imagined or constructed. However, neither the extreme perception of constructivism nor radical positivism allow us to gain more accurate access to pre-modern mentality and the specific phenomenon of travel through time and space.

As late medieval literature clearly indicates, by way of traveling the various protagonists are empowered to experience their world in much more concrete spatial terms than ever before. Mythological time thus transforms into physical time, which passes while the individual traverses countries and crosses oceans.<sup>96</sup> Consequently, it matters significantly, on the one hand, whether a travelogue

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<sup>96</sup> I have explored this issue already in light of late medieval prose novels; Albrecht Classen, "The Innovative Perception of Space (Europe) in Late Medieval German Literature: The Spatial Turn in Light of Eleonore of Austria's Pontus und Sidonia (ca. 1450–1460)," *Neohelicon* 43.2 (2016): 543–57; see also the contributions to this volume by Anne Scott and Jiří Koten.

author reflected on his/her own experiences, or, on the other, simply culled the information from a selection of relevant texts, serving hence as a compiler and an armchair traveler. Undoubtedly, at first sight travel by itself proves to be just a movement of the physical individual in time and space, whereas the truly crucial aspect pertains to the correlation of the self with the environment, as this movement through time and space takes place. This perspective then allows us to overcome the traditional limitations of research on travel literature and to grasp more profoundly what the reports about travels and pilgrimages really mean in terms of human existence and why those documents truly matter also for us today.<sup>97</sup> If we accept Nelson's position, we would have a theoretical model in which time, space, travel, and identity come together harmoniously, all starting out from the observing and experimenting individual:

We start, on any occasion, with some old version or world that we have on hand and that we are stuck with until we have the determination and skill to remake it into a new one. Some of the felt stubbornness of fact is the grip of habit: our firm foundation is indeed solid. Worldmaking begins with one version and ends with another. (97)

All this addresses, of course, the human perspective involved in all travel and hence travel literature, where 'worldmaking' is certainly profoundly at play. However, no travel writing is simply made up of imagination and always draws heavily from the physical, political, and cultural conditions that were either observed with the own eyes or were incorporated through another source.

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<sup>97</sup> See also Tim Rayborn, *The Violent Pilgrimage: Christians, Muslims and Holy Conflicts, 850–1150* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland, 2013). For a rather dubious pilgrimage site, which enjoyed great popularity in the Middle Ages after all, see Eileen Gardiner, *The Pilgrim's Way to St. Patrick's Purgatory* (New York: Italica Press, 2010). Moreover, cf. *Pilgrims and Pilgrimages as Peacemakers in Christianity, Judaism and Islam*, ed. Antón M. Pazos. Compostela International Studies in Pilgrimage, History and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2013); for a contrastive perspective, see Mitchell B. Merback, *Pilgrimage & Pogrom: Violence, Memory, and Visual Culture at the Host-Miracle Shrines of Germany and Austria* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012); *Translating the Relics of St James: From Jerusalem to Compostela*, ed. Antón M. Pazos. Compostela International Studies in Pilgrimage, History and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2017). It deserves mention that pilgrimage is not a unique element in the Christian religion, especially if we think of the Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist tradition. See the *Encyclopedia of Medieval Pilgrimage* (see note 58); *The History of Sacred Places in India as Reflected in Traditional Literature: Papers on Pilgrimage in South Asia*, ed. Hans Bakker. World Sanskrit Conference, 3 (Leiden, New York, et al.: Brill, 1990); Venetia Porter, *The Hajj: Collected Essays*. Research Publication, 193 (London: British Museum, 2013); *The Hajj: Pilgrimage in Islam*, ed. Eric Tagliacozzo and Shawkat M. Toorawa (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016). The literature on this global issue is legion, of course, and we would have to consult as well Shintoism, Mormonism, etc.

Following, I will offer brief summaries of the individual contributions, expanding on them at the same time, where possible and appropriate. It would not have been reasonable to divide the contributions into sub-groups, which would have created artificial thematic bonds that do not exist, although all authors pursue the same question of how time, space, travel, and identity interrelate with each other. Hence, instead, the articles are arranged more or less chronologically, while they all fall under the global categories of time, space, identity, and hence travel, as the overarching metaphor. Insofar as this volume moves forward and endeavors to reach out beyond the traditional approach toward pre-modern travelogues, the image that results out of this anthology represent more of a collage than a holistic image. Nevertheless, despite a certain diffuseness, which cannot really be avoided when one puts together an interdisciplinary collection of relevant studies addressing the issue as it emerged from the early Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, the overarching theme collectively shared remains central to all contributions. This amounts to the conclusion that ‘tempus sive locus sive motus sive identitas,’ to adapt Baruch Spinoza’s famous formula, “Deus, sive Natura.”<sup>98</sup>

For the reader to gain a good sense of the overall structure of this volume, it deserves mention that here we follow a certain chronological sequence, which determines the arrangement of the individual contributions, but the whole is supposed to constitute a kaleidoscope addressing the overarching topic of the entire book. Interestingly, while the original theme chosen for the symposium rested almost exclusively on ‘travel,’ in the course of time it turned out that this would be really a volume on the movement through time and space and the creation of identity in that process. This means that a good number of contributions does not even address ‘travel’ in specific, traditional terms; instead, in those cases the approach chosen aims at analyzing the time-space continuum regarding human identity in the Middle Ages and the early modern time, as mirrored through the individuals’ movement.

## Summaries and Further Reflections

In every volume within our series “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture” it has always proven to be highly productive for me as editor to review each contribution one more time after all vetting and editing had been completed

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<sup>98</sup> Harry M. Tiebout, “‘Deus, Sive Natura ...’,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 16.4 (1956): 512–21; Steven Nadler, “Baruch Spinoza,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2016 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta; online at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/spinoza/> last accessed on Jan. 22, 2018).

for the purpose of writing this introduction and to compose a brief synopsis of the central ideas contained in it. Thereby I could always dialogue with the individual authors once again, but then on a more abstract level, drawing additional connections and projecting the global picture which this volume intends to develop.

Whether individuals traveled or only wrote about travel experiences, or whether they communicated with friends or relatives far away via letters, or went to visit them in person, these situations would not matter so much in the long run, as the correspondence between St. Boniface (672–754) and numerous Anglo-Saxon nuns confirms. These letters created, as Lisa M. C. Weston states in her contribution, a long-distance network, which made it possible for the women to participate in the missionary's extensive journeys and to visualize for themselves the religious work which he did on the Continent. Epistolary literature proves to be a supreme written medium that seems to transcend all limitations of time and space and allows the writer and reader to witness foreign worlds, cultures, and people in proxy. Weston focuses, however, on Hygeburg's *Hodoeporicon* above all, the first and only female *vita* tracing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

She joined her fellow sisters in the monastery of Heidenheim north of Ulm in 761 and is today best known for the *vita* of the founder of her monastery, Willibald, later the Bishop of Eichstätt, who went on a pilgrimage to Rome in 722 and from there continued to the Holy Land. With her *Hodoeporion*, Hygeburg demonstrated that learned women from her time could easily transcend traditional gender barriers and project in their writing distant lands, thereby participating in the religious experience in strongly emotional terms. In this effort, she antedated the strong stance taken by tenth-century Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, claiming authority even in such religious matters as a pilgrimage by a high-ranking male authority.

Through her writing, Hygeburg laid intriguing claims on time and space far away, establishing her own authority, and inviting her readers to partake in the pilgrimage vicariously, which again transcends the limits of the future audience, such as the vow to obey the *stabilitas loci*, for whom past and present merge in the nun's narrative. While the religious woman Egeria went on a practical pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the 380s, which she described in her *Peregrinatio Aethiopiae* or *Itinerarium Egeriae* for a female authorship back home, Hygeburg traveled only to the Continent; however, then she reflected also on a major pilgrimage carried out by the male founder of her monastery. Remarkably, the entire genre of pilgrimage accounts, or religious travelogues, can trace some of its earliest roots to female authors who were apparently were interested in, almost intrigued by, reflecting on foreign worlds, travel, and the transcendence of time and space through their

writing.<sup>99</sup> Many other contributors to this volume, such as Lia Ross, who investigates Margery Kempe's famous *Book* of her mystical visions and travel experiences, and Gavin Fort, who focuses on proxy, travelogues, confirm Weston's findings, though they examine late medieval examples.

Travel itself as a process and operation, as a metaphor and a development is not limited to subjects who leave home and search for foreign lands for many different reasons. On many occasions we can also observe that travel involves objects that are purchased, transported over long distances, and are then sold to a new owner. This has been the destiny for manuscripts and books throughout times in many different cultures because they contain valuable ideas and concepts and were hence sought after whenever a cultural movement was keen on acquiring information from other people and from earlier times. In the West, this is best known under the concept of the *translatio studii*, which has regularly led to profound cultural transformation, whether we think of the Carolingian Renaissance, the Twelfth-Century Renaissance, or the Italian Renaissance.

However, quite similarly, having a comparable impact on the receiving culture, the ninth-century Translation Movement in Syria, which Maha Baddar discusses in her contribution, represented a culture in which a massive amount of older texts was collected by legal and illegal means in Baghdad in order to translate older documents and to make their information available to the new readers. While medieval European intellectuals mostly endeavored to collect classical manuscripts and to adapt their narratives for their own purposes, in the Syrian Translation Movement the purpose for gathering those ancient texts was to gain better access and insights into the teachings contained in them. Here we face an early example of globalism, if not even globalization, depending on the actual reach of the Arabic collectors and translators. Their vast network signaled that they had achieved the establishment of a functioning, highly complex system in which virtually all intellectuals collaborated more or less. This was already an early form of globalization.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> *Egeria's Travels*, newly trans. (from the Latin) with supporting documents and notes by John Wilkinson. 3rd rep. with corrections (1971; Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2006); *Aetheria/Egeria: Reise ins Heilige Land. Latin and German*, trans. Kai Brodersen. Sammlung Tusculum (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016). See also Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 15–45; Linda Honey and Haijo JanWestra, "Eliciting Egeria: The Woman in the Text," *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik* 35.2 (2003): 239–56.

<sup>100</sup> See the far-reaching comments by the editors in the introduction to *Governance in a Globalizing World*, ed. Joseph S. Nye Jr. and John D. Donahue (Cambridge, MA: Visions of Governance for the 21st Century; Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 200), 5: "Social and cultural globalism involves movements of ideas, information, and images, and of people – who

Irrespective of all the assumed glory of traveling, both today and in the pre-modern world, it proves to be a challenge to move around, to visit foreign countries, peoples, sites, to face different languages and religions, and to cope in new political and cultural systems. There have always been some intrepid travelers who enjoy every moment of their experiences away from home, but most others have viewed travel with some kind of trepidation, if not worry and fear. Consequently, numerous travel charms have come down to us that confirm how much medieval and early modern travelers were aware of the dangers that could await them. Chiara Benati illustrates this through an extensive study of relevant text examples from English, German, and Scandinavian texts, including prayers, liturgical narratives, and literary works. As Benati's study makes clear, text production was regarded as necessary throughout the entire period and well beyond (if not until today) to protect the individual from the many dangers that could beset him/her while traveling. Significantly, both pagan and Christian elements often complement each other, as was representative of charms at large. The large number of charms, their wide dissemination over time and space, and the varied use of vernacular and Latin indicate that travel was regarded as a highly important activity that could or should not be avoided. In light of these charms, we can claim with certainty that people traveled extensively already since the twelfth century. Both those who stayed home and those who departed for any kind of journey were worried and appealed to the *numinosum* for help, mostly from Christian saints, Christ, or the Virgin Mary, but at times also from pagan gods and powers, where the Catholic criticism was not so rigid.

While many previous studies on the topic of travel in the pre-modern world focus primarily on narratives produced by Western, Christian travelers, here we have also the opportunity to learn about an Arab traveler, Ibn Fadlan (877–960), who composed his report about his experiences in the Northeastern parts of Europe in 922 C.E. where he encountered the Volga Bulgars, or Vikings. Sally Abed examines his *Risala* by way of focusing on the clash in cultures, with Ibn Fadlan holding steadfast to his Muslim rituals of ablutions and washing, even in the cold winter climate, while his hosts had hardly any contact with water for such

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of course carry ideas and information with them. Examples include the movement of religions or the diffusion of scientific knowledge. An important facet of social globalism involves imitation of one society's practices and institutions by others: what some sociologists refer to as "isomorphism." Often, however, social globalism has followed military and economic globalism. Ideas and information and people follow armies and economic flows, and in so doing, transform societies and markets. At its most profound level, social globalism affects the consciousness of individuals and their attitudes toward culture, politics, and personal identity."

purposes. As much as Ibn Fadlan maintained an attentive eye for the countless differences between his own world and that of the Bulgars/Vikings, he actually sharpened his concern with his own identity in the foreign world while traveling. Even though the Nordic landscape threatened him to lose sight of time in an unstructured world, this ambassador closely observed his own daily routine in the space of the foreign people. Specifically commenting on cultural differences, Ibn Fadlan created a personal space of and for himself in clear contrast to the Bulgar and then the Rus people who have to suffer through terrible winters with extreme cold temperatures and know nothing of personal privacy. Altogether, as Abed notes, Ibn Fadlan's travelogue underscores dramatically the great cultural value of water for this author, particularly because he had to leave his home culture behind and enter into that strange, cold, unhygienic country to the north, where his constant use of water for bodily cleanliness and spiritual purification was soon regarded as a form of hydromancy.

The account, and hence the experience of travel, time, and space, are predicated on a sense of complementarity and contribute to Ibn Fadlan's worldmaking efforts. By contrast, Maha Baddar focuses on the concerted effort by Baghdad scholars such as to secure texts about ancient and early medieval philosophers and their words. Translating them made the old information about astronomy or medicine available to tenth-century Arabic scholars and philosophers, who were busily at work translating Hippocratic and Galenic texts into Arabic, such as the various members of the Bukhtishu family.

A similar process took place in early and high medieval European society, as mirrored in the vastly expanding monastic cultures and the explosive expansion of Latin and vernacular manuscript production, but the Arabic Translation Movement in the ninth century represented a veritable cultural and intellectual Renaissance well before the Twelfth-Century Renaissance in Europe. Translating ancient texts for Baghdad, intellectuals made it possible to access a vast storehouse of knowledge and to instrumentalize it for the further development of Arabic culture, which at that time was far ahead of the European early Middle Ages. In this respect, travel here did not only pertain to the actual physical movements by individual philosophers, theologians, and medical scholars to foreign lands in order to learn about specific scientific practices there, but pertained also to the act of collecting written documents and bringing relevant knowledge, such as about astronomy, back home in order to translate it into Arabic.

While we have commonly thought of physical travelers in the present context, the travel of ideas via translations or sharing of books (voluntarily or involuntarily) represents a much more impactful sort of travel, influencing an entire culture. Abbasid Baghdad thus proved to be a major center of

an exchange of ideas from ancient times to the early medieval Arab culture via translations. Both people and ideas traveled here, which gives us a rather innovative notion of what travel meant already at that time. We can be certain that similar processes took place in medieval and early modern Europe,<sup>101</sup> but the major Translation Movement in ninth-century Baghdad proved to be a significant turning point in the development of Arab identity and Arab concepts of the world.

Travel of a very different kind comes to the fore in the Otranto cathedral floor mosaic from the twelfth century, which Nurit Golan treats as a type of visual travel through history, theology, literature, and science. Granted, there is no active traveler in the huge image, but the spectator, the churchgoer, is deftly invited to travel “up” and “down” the two sides of the three trees and to learn about the spiritual and the physical dimensions of all human existence. This ‘encyclopedia’ in mosaics required, for their full inspection and comprehension, a thorough study of a variety of cultural contexts, and a very wide spectrum of intellectual erudition, especially because the massive floor invoked reflections on time and space with regard to the individual spectator.

The artists were not simply presenting illustrations of episodes in the Bible, in mythological literature, and in classical texts, but specifically used three trees that represented the latest state of the arts in terms of scholastic displaying of scientific knowledge, and the viewer was invited to wander with his/her feet and eyes and to learn in that process. Golan identifies the trees as road maps of intellectual content and compares them with the later *mappaemundi*, thus projecting an alternative form of world making and digestion of encyclopedic details within a spiritual context. The ideas of Alexander the Great and King Arthur, Atlas bearing the cosmos, the signs of the zodiac, the Melusine figure, are presented side by side with biblical and theological motives. The mosaic implies multiple meanings and represents a major intellectual and religious challenge for the mind traveler regarding this masterpiece of art. Golan also suggests that the mosaic floor was a monumental artistic expression of Bishop Jonathas’s loyalty to the king and the kingdom of Sicily, where many cultures merged and vied for ever expanding knowledge about the past and the present. In this regard, this mosaic floor, a kind of a visual library, became a medium inspiring an intellectual and spiritual travel.

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**101** Every medieval European library with holdings of manuscripts could tell a similar story. When the movable type was invented, things changed, but the dissemination of books and ideas through personal contacts continued; see Jan-Dirk Müller, “‘Wandering’ Scholars in the Beginning of Printing,” *Knowledge in Motion* (see note 90), 412–26.



Comparable to the Otranto floor mosaic, we could also regard numerous medieval illustration programs in manuscripts as a kind of mental map, which Na'ama Shulman demonstrates in the case of Eike von Repgow's famous *Sachsenspiegel* (*Saxons' Mirror*; ca. 1220–1235), wherein the viewer is invited to meander through the text and the rich miniature sequences and learn in that process how to understand and interpret legal cases according to the standard laws. Just as in the case of the *Mirrors for Princes*, the illustrated books provide suggestions, guidance, and instructions for maneuvering through the complicated field of law, undoubtedly a mental form of travel, which does not even require that we stretch the metaphorical meaning too much. Shulman thus urges us to view even the *Sachsenspiegel* as very related to the many medieval *mappaemundi* since the viewer/reader has to move from image to image in order to understand the structure of law as outlined by Eike. Intellectual aspects are thereby articulated visually, which initiates a mental travel across time and space, something which we will later observe also in the case of proxy pilgrimages (see the contribution to this volume by Gavin Fort).

Quite parallel to the way how John Mandeville projected his imaginary world travel in his most popular *Travels*, which was a true medieval bestseller, the *mappaemundi*, the *Mirror for Princes*, and so also the law book with its didactic images invited the reader/viewer to move far beyond their own limitations and to acquire new knowledge. Artists and the writer cooperated to create what we would call a chronotope, allowing the mind to peruse the text and to interact with the fictional characters representing victims and perpetrators, along with the judges and executioners, all situated within a specific time frame at a specific location where Eike closely interacts with his audience, addressing them as an authority figure and a guide, almost like Virgil in Dante's *Divina Commedia*, although here we do not face a form of *catabasis*, as Warren Tormey will discuss in his contribution. Shulamit identifies also the extent to which Eike incorporated historical, political, and geographic knowledge, which thus correlates the *Sachsenspiegel* rather closely with medieval encyclopedias and, again, the *mappaemundi*. Mnemonic devices and legal instructions combine here to develop a guideline for daily life and to organize human existence; therefore, this illustrated law book truly served as a kind of travel guide through society in past and present. Cartographically and diagrammatically, Eike's work and the Ebstorf world map, for instance, thus share many similarities that connected them with the global theme of travel, here in mental terms, which allowed the reader to aim for a well-established court system where every crime was tried equally and fairly.

The differences between Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde* and John Mandeville's *Travels* have so far been the subject of many studies, the first having

been based on actual, concrete travel experiences – here disregarding some recent attempts to question Polo's claim altogether<sup>102</sup> – the latter basically being the result of the efforts by a learned armchair traveler. Whatever the situation actually might have been, we can recognize in the case of both writers how much the literary discourse, including factual narratives such as travelogues, provides much imaginary freedom and a wide range of possibilities to project movements through time and space, whether that was realistic or not.

This is also the case in the early thirteenth-century *Lancelot-Grail*, alternatively known as the *Prose Lancelot* or the *Vulgate Cycle: The Legend of the Holy Grail*, where the transport of Christ's blood from Palestine to England by Josephus and the colonization of that country, where allegedly Muslims had lived, six hundred years before the emergence of that religion, sets the stage. Doaa Omran applies a colonialist perspective in order to identify and analyze the elements of anatopism (space) and anachronism or prochronism (time) being at work in the romance, insofar as the poet projected events, people, and religions into the distant past and lands where they had never taken place or existed in historical terms.

Ingeniously, because Christ's blood and hence the Grail have already arrived in England, the knights of the Round Table no longer perceive any need to leave their homeland and to search for adventures and hence their chivalric challenges in the world of King Arthur. By means of anatopism and prochronism, the threat by Saracen forces has here been eliminated for good, giving the Christian world of the Grail a sense of triumphalism almost beyond any crusader ideology, especially because the rapid elimination of the Muslim population or its conversion respectively constitutes the foundation of a new British identity, at least within the literary framework. In *The Vulgate Cycle*, then, the trauma of profound challenges of the Christian faith by military and religious opponents was fully compensated and eliminated by means of mass conversion and the solid establishment of the Christian religion in the British isles. All this, however, was possible only because, as the poet alerts us, Christ's blood was transported from Palestine to Britain.

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**102** See now the contribution to this volume by Romedio Schmitz-Esser. Cf. also the contributions to *Marco Polo and the Encounter of East and West*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Amilcare Iannucci (see note 66); Albrecht Classen, "Marco Polo and John Mandeville: The Traveler as Authority Figure, the Real and the Imaginary," *Authorities in the Middle Ages: Influence, Legitimacy, and Power in Medieval Society*, ed. Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola, and Tuija Aionen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 12 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 239–48.

Whereas Maha Baddar in her contribution views the concept of ‘travel’ through a study of the collection of books in Baghdad as a translation center, Omran illustrates how in the *Vulgate Cycle* the travel of Christ’s blood makes possible the establishment of a new kingdom, if not nation. In Baddar’s case, it is the transport of objects from the outside to the inside (*translatio studii*), in Omran’s case it is the transfer of a most valuable, a sacred object from one country to another, practically similar to a *translatio imperii*. Little wonder that in that process the poet of the *Vulgate Cycle* additionally contributed to and intensified the malignment and stereotyping of Muslims as unworthy enemies of the Christian faith.

Medieval travelers reached many more goals than we might imagine today, and they traversed many different countries on their quests for a variety of destinations in their roles as settlers, marauders, pirates, warriors, merchants, or diplomats. Albrecht Classen discusses this phenomenon in a variety of pre-modern narratives and poems where the world of northern Europe emerges as surprisingly important, although, as archaeologists would confirm today, Scandinavia and neighboring countries were, by far, not as much populated as western and central and southern Europe. Both late medieval German and English travel writers provided their audiences with remarkable insights about the northern countries, and when we include the vast corpus of Icelandic sagas in which we learn much about the experiences of the Vikings and other individuals, we are also privileged to gain an understanding of vast explorations of distant territories and their settlement by courageous travelers and explorers. However, as Classen also indicates, in many cases the Nordic parts of Europe and neighboring islands only served as narrative projections to underscore the protagonists’ impressive outreach beyond the traditional epistemological world-view in geographic terms.

If we can trust the literary evidence, pre-modern travelers were much more capable of plowing the sea and to move around many Nordic parts than we might have imagined so far. The poets are not in any denial about the lack of population and cultures in the distant lands, but this did not hold the protagonists back from exploring the regions far beyond the normal horizon, and this already well before the modern age. In short, the early and high Middle Ages were very much on the move and cannot be misrepresented as a static and limited world. Both Scandinavia and the various islands in the vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean were the target of numerous travels and explorations by individuals and larger groups of travelers already in the pre-modern age. Later centuries witnessed, of

course, a steady growth of travels to the North, for economic, political, and scientific reasons.<sup>103</sup>

Commonly, however, much relevant research has probed travel from medieval and early modern Europeans to the East, not only to the Holy Land, but also to India and even China. While Franciscans and Dominicans were in the lead missionizing in China, for instance, during the fourteenth century, by the sixteenth century members of the Jesuit Order took on the central role in reaching out to non-Christians all over the world, both in the Americas and in the Philippines, in Japan and in Canada. By contrast, Romedio Schmitz-Esser investigates to what extent there might have been interest in the western world by Chinese or other travelers. Further, he wonders whether it might be possible to identify specific East-Asian influence on medieval and early modern Europe, which proves to be a rather challenging task. We know through the wide dissemination of the famous narrative of *Barlaam and Josaphat* that some elements of Buddhistic thought entered, adapted for specific purposes, the pre-modern Christian world, but it still represents a remarkable puzzle as to whether there might have been Asian explorations of Europe. Schmitz-Esser offers insightful theoretical reflections concerning the difficulties in identifying possibilities of a two-way street with respect to possible intercultural relationships, and reflects on the sparse evidence for its existence produced so far. He discusses some early medieval Arabic travelers to Europe, but overall, the Arabic focus rested rather on India and China. The Mongols attacked Europe in the early thirteenth century, but then quickly withdrew, never to return, obviously out of a lack of interest in that distant world. At times, military cooperation between East and West seemed a possibility, and one or two envoys from the Mongol court reached the West, but again, as Schmitz-Esser underscores, not much came of it.

Certainly, trade connecting the Far East with Europe, involving items such as silk and spices, took place, but this did not lead to any noteworthy exploration of the western markets by Chinese travelers, mapmakers, merchants, or intellectuals, apart from some exchanges of iconography as documented on some fourteenth-century gravestones for Christian dead erected on Chinese soil. We might face here the unfortunate pairing of Eurocentrism with Sinocentrism far into the early modern age. However, there might be one way of explaining this phenomenon specifically if we listen to the comments by the anonymous German author

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**103** Elisabeth Wåghäll Nivre, "Northern Encounters: Michael Heberer, an Early Modern German Traveler to Sweden," *Knowledge in Motion* (see note 90), 429–49.

of the early modern novel, *Fortunatus* (1509), where the protagonist/narrator indicates, after *Fortunatus* has returned from India,

Moecht ainen wunder nemen. warumb die auß India vnnd auß andern landen nicht herauß kaemen in vnsere lannd. Ist die vrsach sy hoeren sagen wie vnsre land vnaertig seyen / von keltin vnd auch nit guote frucht haben / hond sorg das sy gleich sturben / machen och die rechnung / sy wurden für toren geschaetz / das sy auß guoten landen in boese zugen / vnd guott vmb boeß gaebenn. Auch ligt yn das an / das sy wissen das groß sorg vnderwegen ist.<sup>104</sup>

[We might wonder why the people in India and other countries do not come to visit our lands. The reason that they hear that our countries are unpleasant because of the cold climate and do not produce good fruit. They are also worried that they might die right away; and they calculate that they would be regarded as fools because they would move from good to bad countries, exchanging good for evil. Moreover, they know that there are many trouble waiting for them if they travel those long distances.]

Nevertheless, as Schmitz-Esser's study illustrates clearly, the time has come for us to pursue Medieval Studies from a global perspective and to probe whether and how people moved around in the various parts of the world and took interest in cultures on other sides of the globe.<sup>105</sup> At this point, it appears that

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**104** Quoted from *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts: Nach den Erstdrucken mit sämtlichen Holzschnitten*, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller. Bibliothek der Frühen Neuzeit, 1 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1990), 491. Cf. Anne Simon, "The *Fortunatus* Volksbuch in the Light of Later Mediaeval Travel Literature," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 12 (1987): 175–86; Hannes Kästner, *Fortunatus – Peregrinator mundi: Welterfahrung und Selbsterkenntnis im ersten deutschen Prosaroman der Neuzeit*. Rombach Wissenschaft – Reihe Litterae (Freiburg i. Br.: Verlag Rombach, 1990), 76–106; Albrecht Classen, "Die Welt eines spätmittelalterlichen Kaufmannsreisenden. Ein mentalitätsgeschichtliches Dokument der Frühneuzeit: *Fortunatus*," *Monatshefte* 86.1 (1994): 22–44; id., "The Crusader as Lover and Tourist: Utopian Elements in Late Medieval German Literature: From *Herzog Ernst* to *Reinfried von Braunschweig* and *Fortunatus*," *Current Topics in Medieval German Literature: Texts and Analyses (Kalamazoo Papers 2000–2006)*, ed. Sibylle Jefferis. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 748 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2008), 83–102; id., "The Encounter with the Foreign in Medieval and Early Modern German Literature: Fictionality as a Springboard for Non-Xenophobic Approaches in the Middle Ages: *Herzog Ernst*, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Konrad von Würzburg, *Die Heidin*, and *Fortunatus*," *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. Albrecht Classen (see note 2), 457–87; id., "Fremdbegegnung, Dialog, Austausch, und Staunen: Xenologische Phänomene in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters. Vom *Hildebrandslied* bis zum *Fortunatus*," *Mediaevistik* 26 (2013): 183–206.

**105** There are some efforts to approach such a perspective, but despite key words in some book titles, truly global investigations are still very rare and beset by numerous limitations; see, for instance, the contributions to *Welterfahrung und Welterschließung* (see note 35). See also the new journal *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies*, ed. Matthias M. Tischler, vol. 1 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014). Over and over again, scholars talk about transculturality, but then they mostly deal with very specific courtly settings in one cultural entity, such as the

pre-modern Europeans had considerable interest in and demonstrated great fascination with the East since so many travelers made their way to India, China, and a variety of Middle Eastern countries. From a global perspective, however, we need to probe much more deeply, and this in conjunction with our eastern colleagues, to what extent the eastern world also demonstrated specific curiosity about the West.

The issue of ‘transculturality’ continues to represent a huge challenge particularly for the pre-modern period, though it has a significant bearing on the large topic of travel.<sup>106</sup> For instance, when the famous Persian poet Sa’di’s *Gulistan*, or *Bed of Roses* (1258) was finally translated into various European languages (French: 1634; Latin: 1651; German: 1636 and 1654; Dutch: 1654; English: 1773), it was carried from Persia to the West, hence appropriated by the western intellectuals. Granted, Sa’di himself traveled far and wide, but he apparently never entered the European heartlands and does not seem to have searched for any contacts with Christian writers and intellectuals. We cannot claim at this point that Persian poets or translators were involved in that process, which undermines the concept of transculturality to some extent. After all, this situation represents a one-directional process, and yet it also illustrates the great impact of ideas or

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Langobard kingdom, medieval Japan, the Normannic and Hohenstaufen kingdom of Sicily, etc. See the contributions to *Transkulturelle Verflechtungen im mittelalterlichen Jahrtausend: Europa, Ostasien, Afrika*, ed. Michael Borgolte and Matthias M. Tischler (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012). However, the focus on migration movements throughout the Middle Ages and in the early modern age might pave the way for more global perspectives; see Michael Borgolte, *Mittelalter in der größeren Welt: Essays zur Geschichtsschreibung und Beiträge zur Forschung*, ed. Tillmann Lohse and Benjamin Scheller. Europa im Mittelalter, 24 ([Berlin]: Akademie Verlag, 2014). See also the contributions to *Cosmopolitanism and the Middle Ages*, ed. John M. Ganim and Shayne Aaron Legassie (see note 61).

**106** Wolfgang Welsch, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), 194–213; see also the contributions to *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. Albrecht Classen (see note 2); and the contributions to *Transkulturalität – Identitäten in neuem Licht: Asiatische Germanistentagung in Kanazawa 2008*, ed. Maeda Ryoza (Munich: Iudicium, 2012). This issue is currently discussed far and wide, and the relevant literature is legion; see, for instance, Heinz Antor, *Inter- und Transkulturelle Studien: Theoretische Grundlagen und interdisziplinäre Praxis*. Anglistische Forschungen, 362 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2006); Chunjie Zhang, *Transculturality and German Discourse in the Age of European Colonialism* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017). One of the major problems, however, which also comes to the surface in the present context, consists of how to communicate across cultures (and of course: languages) and how to build communicative bonds transculturally; see Andreas Hepp, *Transcultural Communication* (Chichester, West Sussex, and Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2015).

poetry that traveled to other countries and cultures throughout time, as Maha Baddar already outlined in her contribution to this volume.<sup>107</sup>

Another way of investigating the concept of travel and its implication for all aspects of culture would be to study food production, food dissemination, and food preparation, as Peter Stabel and Inneke Baatsen discuss in their contribution, focusing on the situation in the medieval Low Countries. When new food-stuffs arrive in a country or a continent, this has a tremendous influence on the entire cultural orientation and framework, so it is always significant to trace how food items were transported across the world, which is also relevant in the pre-modern world. Although the massive wave of pilgrimages to the Holy Land exposed large numbers of late medieval Europeans to the Middle Eastern cuisine, evidence from the cuisine in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Dutch cities indicates that the interest in spices actually declined, whereas the use of sugar grew significantly. At the same time, meals were increasingly utilized for cultural performance, reflecting the new urban classes and their growing financial means, but also the strengthening of Humanism and the ideal of humanistic conviviality at dinner times. These culinary and gustatory changes also entailed new refined manners, a reflection of a global civilization process as outlined already a long time ago by the German sociologist Norbert Elias.<sup>108</sup>

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**107** Elio Brancaforte, "Persian Words of Wisdom Travel to the West: Seventeenth-Century European Translations of Sa 'dī's *Gulistan*," *Knowledge in Motion* (see note 90), 450–72. For a German translation, see Muslih Ad-Dīn Sa 'dī, *Der Rosengarten*. Auf Grund der Übersetzung von Karl Heinrich Graf neu bearbeitet, herausgegeben und kommentiert von Dieter Bellmann (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1982); for a modern English translation, see *Rose Garden of Sa'di: Gulistan of Sa'di*, trans. Edward Rehatsek, ed. with a preface by W. G. Archer, intro. G. M. Wickens (New York: Putnam, 1965).

**108** Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*. Vol. 2: *Wandlungen der Gesellschaft: Entwurf zu einer Theorie der Zivilisation* (1939; Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1980). For an English trans., see Edmund Jephcott, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization* (1978; Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994). For a critical perspective, see Michael Hinz, *Der Zivilisationsprozess: Mythos oder Realität: Wissenschaftssoziologische Untersuchungen zur Elias-Duerr-Kontroverse*. *Figurationen*, 4 (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2002); Stephen Mannell, *Norbert Elias: Civilization, and the Human Self-Image* (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1989); Dennis Smith, *Norbert Elias: A Critical Assessment* (London: Sage, 2000); see also Roger Salerno, *Beyond Enlightenment: Lives and Thoughts of Social Theorists* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004); *The Sociology of Norbert Elias*, ed. Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Mary Fulbrook, *Un-Civilizing Processes?: Excess and Transgression in German Society and Culture: Perspectives Debating with Norbert Elias*. *German Monitor*, 66 (Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi, 2007); *Gesellschaftsprozesse und individuelle Praxis: Vorlesungsreihe zur Erinnerung an Norbert Elias*, ed. Stefanie Ernst and Hermann Korte (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien

Stabel and Baatsen investigate primarily Dutch pilgrimage accounts written by members of the middle class between ca. 1450 and 1540, where many comments about food can be found, such as in the highly detailed account by the Douai textile merchant Jacques Le Saige who went to Jerusalem in 1519. His travelogue provides us with very specific information about general costs, the travel route, his experiences along the way, and also about the food that he consumed. Since he had the most freedom to choose his food while traversing France and Italy, Le Saige remarked most meticulously about those aspect in these European locations. Other pilgrims complained about the ridiculously high prices for food in the harbor cities, such as Venice, or they commented about poor accommodations, but what matters for us most are the specifics they include about individual types of drinks or foodstuff. These accounts allow Stabel and Baatsen to evaluate more concretely the travelers' social status and cultural background, as mirrored by their comments about food consumed during their pilgrimage.

By contrast, when the Burgundian nobleman Bertrandon de la Broquière traveled to the Holy Land in 1432 and 1433, he observed food much more as a medium for social and political interaction, which corresponded closely with his actual diplomatic purposes for his journey. This also meant that he made many efforts to meet locals and to taste their native foods, often prepared in a different fashion than in Europe, which invited him to embrace at least tentatively transculturality in a very pragmatic, natural manner, as we might say, especially because Bertrandon pursued political ends, above all, and needed to establish constructive relationships with his hosts. However, as Stabel and Baatsen also emphasize, he did not develop a systematic concept of foreign food and tried it only on special occasions, such as festive dinners whenever he was officially invited to attend a political gathering over a meal, for instance. Overall, however, as we learn here, nowhere does the focus truly rest on foodstuff since all travelogues were mostly concerned either with religious or political matters. And most pilgrims did not open up much to the foreign foods and continued to feed on their usual bread, cheese, and poultry. Nevertheless, even if the information about foodstuff flowed only sparingly, this approach serves exceedingly well to perceive how much the European Christian pilgrims were open to the new cultures or not, whether they were simply shepherded like modern mass tourists to their destinations and then fed with familiar food items to satisfy their basic needs, or whether they were willing at least to try some of the strange items offered to them. However, we also

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Wiesbaden, 2017). See also the comments on Elias in my Introduction to *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 74–82, 84, 91–92, et passim.



have to consider that the pilgrimage authors could simply not afford to reveal much about the material aspects of their travels, hence about their own meals, if they did not want to undermine their religious ambitions and zeal.

Mysticism, one of the most esoteric phenomena in the entire pre-modern world, which appealed to many people, was abhorred by others, and triggered severe criminal persecutions by some Church authorities, at times can also be viewed through the lens of travel, as Lia Ross illustrates in her study of the English mystic Margery Kempe. In her famous *Book*, the first English autobiography, she predicated many of her mystical experiences on her travels and can be identified as a traveling ‘saleswoman’ of visions, so to speak. Margery undertook an extraordinary number of travels, first throughout England, later to the Continent, and finally also to the Holy Land, always on the search for pilgrimage sites where she could feed her mystical inclinations and experience the Godhead once again. Without her visions she would not have gone traveling, and without her travels she would not have been graced with so many revelations. As Ross confirms, because of her strong feelings of mystical empowerment resulting from her travels, Margery even took all the time in the world to visit additional shrines, holy sites, and other significant locations throughout her life and thus became a truly intrepid traveler. What Geoffrey Chaucer projected through his *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400), what numerous other European writers of entertaining narratives projected in their accounts (Georg Wickram in his *Rollwagenbüchlein* from 1555; see also below), Margery practiced in her own life, merging her religious devotion with her passion for traveling. She thereby demonstrated that she as a mystic did not know of any limits, neither in physical nor in spiritual terms.

Older research tended to claim that courtly romances and related genres seemed to be less concerned with time and space since the protagonists operate in rather fictional spaces. As Erich Auerbach had once remarked about the “pictures of contemporary reality” in this genre, they seem “to have sprung from the ground: the ground of legend and fairy tale, so that ... they are entirely without any basis in political reality. The geographical, economic, and social conditions on which they depend are never explained.”<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, all major courtly characters are on the move, they are under time pressure, or they face other challenges

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**109** Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. from the German by Willard R. Trask (1946; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953/1968), 133. See now, Uta Störmer-Caysa, *Grundstrukturen* (see note 44), who talks about “Biegsame Landschaften und Sproßräume” (70; flexible landscapes and multiplying spaces). This is also discussed at length in the contribution to this volume by Jiří Koten.

trying to prioritize their tasks and goals. Anne Scott investigates the way in which the triangulation of time, space, and identity is configured and determined by Chaucer in his romances, and how those three aspects are couched within the experience of travel or movement through space. While Scott agrees indirectly with Auerbach, she also emphasizes how much the experience in those spaces and during certain periods of time deeply impact the formation of the characters' identity. This closely aligns with our own observation above that all travel profoundly influences each individual, both in past and present.

Whether in *The Knight's Tale* or in *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer has his protagonists move around, occupy spaces, gaze into other spaces, and experience the passing of time as something deeply influential on their personalities. Scott emphasizes how much the poet instrumentalizes spaces in virtually all of his narratives and manipulates them in a highly complex fashion. Even restriction of movement by means of imprisoning a character does not stop the narrative flow because events continue to occur outside, as observed by the prisoner, whose eyes move back and forth, undergoing a type of mental travel.<sup>110</sup> Similarly, the garden, the amphitheater, and even linguistic spaces emerge here as highly relevant in structuring human movement and identity, as Chaucer explores throughout his extensive work. The attributes of spaces, including domestic space, such as in *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, illustrate the travel from one location to the other in concrete physical and in metaphorical terms, and both shed light on character formation, although there is also always the danger of illusion, as suggested in *The Franklin's Tale*. As much as Chaucer operates with traditional narrative material, Scott's close analysis indicates the extent to which he experimented with the relationship between humans and spaces, and the manner by which the individuals actually moved around, trying to determine the limits and whether those could be transgressed to reach a new level of existence.

While Margery Kempe traversed many parts of Christian Europe by herself or in company (see the study by Lia Ross), most other religious women, especially nuns, were prohibited by their vow of *stabilitas loci* from leaving their monasteries. Several late medieval writers, such as Felix Fabri (1441–1502), who had come back from their pilgrimages, composed accounts about them not only for subsequent travelers, providing specific guidance and directions, but also for those ecclesiastic women who were thus able to read about the pilgrimage and carry it out themselves at least virtually. In his contribution, Gavin Fort examines the genre of proxy pilgrimages,

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**110** See the contribution to this volume by J. Michael Fulton dealing with the imprisonment of the famous Spanish theologian Fray Luis León. Cf. also the comments by Thomas Willard on Johann Reuchlin in his contribution to this volume.

examining Fabri's narrative at first, then turning to the universal significance of place, or location, for pilgrimage at large as mirrored in those substitution narratives. The issue focused on the role of the body on the pilgrimage and the redemptive power of the physical labor, which was, of course, missing in the proxy accounts. As Fort highlights, well into the sixteenth century the debate was ongoing regarding the question whether the concrete presence of the body was required to experience a true pilgrimage (Fabri), or whether a substitute could serve for that purpose.

As much as the entire idea of proxy pilgrimage was debated throughout the Church, this genre grew considerably in the late Middle Ages, as Fort's evidence for England confirms conclusively, drawing from a large corpus of last wills in which, in slight but significant difference to Fabri's account, the testator requested that another person carry out a pilgrimage for the sake of the soul of the deceased. Often, the testators expressed great concern that they could state before God in the afterlife that they fulfilled their own pledge to go on a pilgrimage, even if a representative did this *Ersatz* action on their behalf, which ultimately granted the authors of the last wills a form of indulgence. Even though a relative majority of individuals asked for a proxy pilgrimage within England due to the high cost for pilgrimage to the Continent, the basic idea was always the same, namely, gaining divine grace from holy sites wherever they might be located.

The central concern was to connect with the divine wherever it had manifested itself here on earth. Not everyone was as daring, capable, motivated, and religiously driven as Margery Kempe and other true pilgrims. Concomitantly, the interest in and the need for pilgrimage, in proxy or in person, did not decline at the eve of the Reformation, and this interest has actually continued until today, but that is not the topic of Fort's paper.

It seems worth mentioning, however, that a similar aspect is related in the first story contained in Georg Wickram's famous *Rollwagenbüchlein* from 1555, where a wealthy peasant falls sick and pledges to carry out a pilgrimage to St. Vitus. The holy site is located on the top of a mountain, while a monastery situated at its foot is dedicated to "All Saints" or "All Hallows." The peasant recovers, however, and he is so busy with work that he finally hires a proxy to do the pilgrimage on his behalf. This representative, obviously a very simple-minded person, finds the climb up the mountain to be very arduous; hence, he returns and requests from the door-keeper to send out to him Saint Vitus who, as he assumes, ought to reside in that monastery as well. This is not possible, and the keeper angrily sends the simpleton away, emphasizing that St. Vitus does not have anything to do with their monastery. Once home, the proxy smartly explains that he accomplished his task, handed over the money and a rooster to the saint, but that the latter did not give him any certificate and returned to rooster him as a gift. As dubious as this all proves to be – in fact, the proxy is lying outrightly – the peasant is satisfied with

this report and pays the representative for his service. Wickram then only comments on how foolish this all was and that people should only believe in Christ Himself and disregard the Catholic practice of giving donations.<sup>111</sup> As much as the entire collection of narratives is predicated on the experience of travel and the need to enjoy some entertainment in that process, this story really argues against the practice of pilgrimage, especially if it is not driven by religious sincerity.

Interestingly, to return to the cases in late medieval England, Fort concludes that the destination of the pilgrimage, that is, the place of the holy site, mattered almost exclusively, and not the journey itself, which explains the great popularity of *Ersatz* pilgrims. Just as in the study by Anne Scott, here we observe the intriguing interlacing of time and space in face of the soul's afterlife as mirrored by the large number of late medieval last wills, because those facing their death would not rest until they had found someone willing to travel on their behalf. Little wonder that the Protestants scoffed at all that considerably, as Wickram's examples illustrates vividly.

From here we turn to late medieval Czech literature, i.e., prose novels, mostly translated from the German sources (*Volksbücher*, or *Prosanovellen*, as we would say today), in which, as Jiří Koteš illustrates in his contribution, time and space matter meaningfully, essentially informing the chronotope in the way as Bakhtin had identified it. In older Czech literature, time passed in a less clearly measured sequence, and space was specifically recognized as determined by the Christian faith since the focus almost always rested, in one way or the other, on the soul's quest to reach the afterlife. By contrast, as Koteš notes, in numerous late medieval prose novels space is perceived through an allegorical lens and becomes functionalized for the protagonists' actions, which are often time-based, after all, as dynastic and generational time passes in front of our eyes.

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**111** Georg Wickram, *Rollwagenbüchlein*. Text nach der Ausgabe von Johannes Bolte. Epilogue by Elisabeth Endres (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1984), 11–14; cf. Albrecht Classen, "Witz, Humor, Satire. Georg Wickrams *Rollwagenbüchlein* als Quelle für sozialhistorische und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Studien zum 16. Jahrhundert. Oder: Vom kommunikativen und gewalttätigen Umgang der Menschen in der Frühen Neuzeit," *Jahrbuch für ungarische Germanistik* (1999; appeared in 2000): 13–30; id., "Von Chaucers 'Canterbury Travels' bis zu Wickrams 'Rollwagenbüchlein': Literarische Spiegel des Alltags im Spätmittelalter. Reisen als Gleichmacher der sozialen Stände," *Textallianzen am Schnittpunkt der germanistischen Disziplinen*. Hgg. Alexander Schwarz, Laure Abplanalp Lüscher. Tausch, 14 (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2001), 483–99; id., "The World of Peasants in Early Modern German Literature: Peasants in the Works of Wickram and Kirchhof," *Mittelalterliches Jahrbuch* 48.3 (2013): 415–38; Klaus Grubmüller, "Geselliges Erzählen im Rollwagenbüchlein und andernorts," *Une germanistique sans rivages: mélanges en l'honneur de Frédéric Hartweg*, ed. Emmanuel Béhague et Denis Goeldel (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2008), 209–17.

Many of the events are grounded in ancient history and evolve according to conditions as they had been set up in the past. Space, by contrast, often seems of secondary importance and could be located virtually anywhere, except for its religious purpose, when that is mentioned; the case of the French, German, or Czech version of *Melusine* seems to be an exception because here the chronotope forms a much tightly unified entity than in other novels. But geographical locations were also allegorized and thus could function in very different terms. Significantly, subsequent novels followed the same model, mirroring the growing adaptation of the early modern chronotope.

Altogether, as we learn from Koton, the early modern novels paid increasing attention to the flow of time and offered much more information about the geographical locations because the new characters operate in an increasingly mobile world, traversing very specific locations in their endeavors and thus finding the basis for their own new selves. Since the fourteenth century, foreign lands were increasingly projected in real terms, and world mapping gained in significance, which the entire genre of early prose novels in French, German, and Czech reflects, or, as Koton would have it, which they actually projected and conditioned in mental-historical terms. This late medieval genre thus alerts us to the fertile development of previous strategies to incorporate references to time and space already in courtly romances (see Scott's contribution to this volume), although the purposes of this approach in the prose novels was more politically driven.

Previous research has done a lot of work on late medieval travelers, normally focusing on those originating from France, England, Germany, Italy, or Spain. David Tomíček, by contrast, introduces the Czech traveler and writer, Christopher Harant of Polžice and Bezručice (1564–1621), who visited, together with Hermann Czernin of Chudenice, the Holy Land in 1598 and left a detailed account of his experiences, which was first printed in 1608. Harant later played a significant role in Czech-Habsburg politics leading over to the Thirty Years' War, but here the focus rests on Harant's observations in the foreign world and his treatment of miracles and wonders. As much as the author displayed a scholarly mind, he was also deeply influenced by the characteristic fascination with wonders and wondrous objects, animals, and also people, an attitude which was dominant in the highest echelons of the royal classes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as Rudolf II's "Cabinet of curiosities."<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> See, for instance, *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Patrick Mauriès, *Cabinets of Curiosities* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002).

Harant apparently paid great attention to various types of new botanical gardens, such as in Padua, and he studied any collection of miraculous objects or plants wherever he went on his journey to the Holy Land, demonstrating in that process a broad interest both in the scientific and the fanciful. This is maybe best illustrated by his extensive comments about the poisonous snakes on the island of Cyprus and strange phenomena on the island of Crete with poison-infected women whose bite would thus be deadly for the male victims. At the same time, Harant remarked in a detailed fashion on the air in the city of Venice compared to the air in Cairo, on the conditions of the Dead Sea, and the high water quality of the river Jordan. The study of herbals for medicinal purposes occupied his mind quite extensively, hence his great curiosity about special gardens set up in major cities, such as Padua and Cairo. As Tomíček alerts us, this travel author combined traditional lore with new scientific observations, writing both as a devout pilgrim and as an early modern scientist and medical doctor who found the use of opium to be most intriguing. He drew much from his own experiences on his extensive travel, but he also culled much information from written sources and collections of *mirabilia* assembled by the emperor and others during his time.

In previous research, the theme of ‘travel’ mostly pertained to actual travelers going on a pilgrimage or a diplomatic mission. For too long, however, have we ignored the fact that most craftsmen, and especially the apprentices and journeymen, had to travel as part of their education, which Charlotte A. Stanford discusses here in light of the carpenters in sixteenth-century London. Wherever a major building project was underway, masons, carpenters, painters, sculptors, and many others were needed, attracting individuals from both nearby and far away. Stanford focuses on the Russell family which had made the construction of scaffolds their speciality; this required that they regularly traveled to new sites for work. While the tradition of family dynasties of medieval stonemasons is attested, some of whose members traveled from site to site, the evidence for carpenters creating similar artisan dynasties is less robust. The Russells are a noteworthy exception.

The records of the individual construction sites shed important light on the workers involved, their payment, their education and skills, their origin, and their collaboration with other experts. Most importantly for our purposes, here we face the great opportunity to trace the movement of craftsmen across the English landscape, according to their assignments and tasks all over the country. This means that we gain a good sense of how much technical know-how was required for the erection of those major cathedrals, abbeys, palaces, and other buildings in medieval and early modern Europe. Not surprisingly, specialists for

individual building projects had to be brought in, often from the Continent.<sup>113</sup> Medieval and early modern craftsmen thus prove to have been highly mobile and could be found regularly on the road.

Just like aristocrats and merchants, craftsmen and pilgrims populated medieval and early modern roads, countless intellectuals also roamed the world for many different reasons, both in Europe and in the Middle East (see the contribution here by Maha Baddar). Throughout the Middle Ages, missionaries, Franciscan and Dominican friars, students, university professors, diplomats, artists, masons, and many other people traveled far and wide. Thomas Willard illustrates this with his study of the greatest Christian Hebraist of his time, Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522), who was constantly on the move either for the purpose of study, or for employment, or for scholarly interests. Despite his great learning, he was severely challenged by some of his opponents for his views about the role of Hebrew and the position of Jews at his time, but he continued to enjoy highest respect for his first-rate knowledge of Hebrew and also Greek.

Intellectuals have commonly been forced to seek employment far away from home, and both medieval and early modern scholars faced the same destiny, as the case of Reuchlin demonstrates. Often with only uncertain sponsors, patrons, or general supporters, scholars such as Reuchlin had to deal with extensive challenges, as much as he enjoyed greatest respect among his peers for his intellectual accomplishments. While the converted Jew Johannes Pfefferkorn heavily railed against all Hebrew books, Reuchlin defended them from an intellectual position and counter-charged that the critics would not even know Hebrew and hence could not condemn those texts in the first place. All those trial and tribulations, but also his role as a judge and diplomat, required Reuchlin to travel much throughout Germany and also to Italy, which allowed him to set up wide-flung networks of early modern intellectuals with whom he regularly corresponded, a typical feature of most humanists at his time. In particular, he turned into a great expert on Cabala and wrote about it extensively, which ultimately and oddly positioned him somewhere between Catholicism, Judaism, and Lutheranism. Considering his extensive traveling, his great learning, and his deeply committed

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**113** See now *Resident Aliens in Later Medieval England*, ed. Mark Ormrod, Nicola McDonald, and Craig Taylor. Studies in European Urban History (1100–1800), 42 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018). See also Knut Schulz, “Die Handwerksgesellen,” *Unterwegssein im Spätmittelalter*, ed. Peter Moraw. Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung, Beiheft, 1 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1985), 71–92. See also the contributions to *Handwerk in Europa: Vom Spätmittelalter bis zur Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Knut Schulz, together with Elisabeth Müller-Luckner. Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien, 41 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000).

humanistic studies, there is little wonder that he hardly ever settled properly and was on the road all the time, not untypical of other great scholars in the late Middle Ages and the early modern age.

Just as Chaucer dealt with imprisoned knights and blocked off views in gardens (see the contribution to this volume by Anne Scott), for instance, so the lack of personal freedom and the experience in a concrete prison, set up by the Inquisition, also deserve to be dealt with in our context. J. Michael Fulton turns his attention to the imprisonment of the famous Spanish theologian, poet, and philosopher, Fray Luis de León, and his compatriots, Gaspar de Grajal, Martín Martínez Cantalapiedra, and Alonso Gudielall under suspicion of heresy for their writing in 1572. They were constantly questioned, threatened, and investigated, but at the end, even the Inquisition could not determine any guilt in their case and had to absolve them from any alleged wrongdoing. The charges were multi-fold, but none could be verified, despite the best inquisitorial efforts, which also were influenced by anti-Judaic sentiments since the four charged individuals were descendants of converso families. As miserable as the prison conditions were, Fray Luis, above all, survived and continued with his teachings after the release, while his fellow-prisoners fared much worse despite their initially better health, obviously because he was filled with a pugnacious attitude and also resisted the injustice committed against him, which filled him with a high degree of resilience, in contrast to the others' passivity and resignation. Fray Luis was able, as Fulton suggests, to travel mentally out of his prison and thus to maintain a healthy mind throughout the entire period.

Even though this imprisonment was the very opposite to travel and hence physical freedom, we can identify here an ideally contrastive picture, which indicates how much Fray Luis's intellectual and spiritual strength supported him throughout the entire period to keep his mind outside of the prison and to struggle hard to regain his freedom, directly challenging both the various witnesses against him and especially the inquisitors. In fact, as Fulton concludes, Fray Luis's inability to travel and to be released from prison hardened his resolve and brought out some of the best of his own writings. Even though here we do not face a traveler at all, just the opposite, the examination of Fray Luis's suffering in prison highlights the actual value of the notion of travel, fractured by the entities of time and space.

We have seen that some women in the Middle Ages were well capable of traveling, either going on pilgrimages, such as Margery Kempe (see Lia Ross's contribution), or traveling to another court for the purpose of marriage, such as Queen Anne of Bohemia (1366–1394), who, as the oldest daughter of Emperor Charles IV, married



the English King Richard II in 1382. Already in the early Middle Ages numerous English nuns traveled to the Continent, following their role model St. Boniface, or writing about male pilgrims (see Lisa M. Weston's contribution).

Even in Counter-Reformation Spain, we hear of a good number of female travelers, though they were commonly cast as *pícaras* in the contemporary literature. María Dolores Morillo, in her contribution to this volume, illustrates this with a close reading of Alonso de Salas Barbadillo's *La hija de Celestina* from 1612 (second revised edition in 1614), where the female protagonist Elena travels extensively across Spain, but only because her social existence is constantly threatened, and because her criminal activities force her to disappear regularly from her location of operation as a 'loose woman.' Significantly, as Morillo alerts us, we can point to a whole group of *pícaro* novels in which the female character is extraordinarily cast in negative terms. Her constant travel indicates that despite her best efforts she is significantly marginalized and a foot-loose character. Apparently, the male poets projected the *pícaro* as a threat to the social order and moral fabric of society, but since she is regularly identified as an exotic outsider, the author allowed the audience to reflect on the perceived danger from women like her or to feel relieved that the danger from this sexually aggressive female could be contained – she simply does not stay long anywhere, does not put down roots, and always travels with two male companions who help her tricking and deceiving rich men by alluring them to her eroticized body.

However, more harshly and cruelly than in other *pícaro*-novels, Elena suffers a terrible death by execution (strangulation and barreling) for trying to kill her husband, which thus concludes all of her movements and efforts to carve out an existence for herself in a hostile, male-dominated environment. The poet highlights the strong contrast between this *pícaro* and all the honorable women in the city of Toledo, for instance, in an attempt to demonize Elena for going against the grain: for traveling, lying, using her beauty and sexuality to her advantages, all of which, in a nutshell, does not include staying in and rearing children. But those women also do not travel as Elena does, who descends, as she tells herself, from a Morisco mother and regularly practices lying as a critical strategy for her sex business. A woman's constant movement thus is projected as a sign of moral depravity and hence as something unacceptable in deeply patriarchal Catholic Spain, where honest and good wives were supposed to stay at home with their husbands, being earthly representatives of the Virgin Mary. Even though Elena shares many features with the infamous Celestina in the notorious novel in dialogue by Fernando de Rojas (1499), she is intimately associated with the picaresque tradition for it is precisely the road and travel during which she is allowed to tell her own life story. This has, to some extent, a striking parallel with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400) and Georg Wickram's *Rollwagenbüchlein* (1555),

to mention just two examples of late medieval and early modern travel-based literary works, although neither one would fall into the picaresque tradition.

After all, anyone who turns to wandering the earth unsettles traditional order and indicates that all common borders or limits are simply human constructions and can be transgressed, and this also in moral, ethical, and religious terms, as in the case of Salas Barbadillo's novel.

This then leads over to a more universal, metaphorical reflection on travel, within the motif of *catabasis*, as it was developed already in the epics of classical antiquity, and then was adopted by medieval and early modern poets as well. Warren Tormey at first outlines how the motif of *catabasis* emerged and became applied throughout times, such as in the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus* (middle of the fourth century), which was translated into many European vernaculars throughout the Middle Ages and beyond, in the Old English *Beowulf* (ca. 7th century), in Dante's *Divina Commedia* (ca. 1330), or in the work of the *Pearl* poet (late fourteenth century), but then he focuses specially on its appearance in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590) and Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667). In the case of Spenser, *catabasis* serves to reflect on political and military developments in England during the early modern time, specifically with respect with Elizabethan colonizing efforts in Ireland. The descent to the depth here does not serve to confront the individual with hell, or with chaos, but rather as an otherworld journey and a catalyst to experience an earthly paradise in political terms as a civilized colony. The protagonists undergo profound challenges during their *catabasis*, but they rise strengthened and become better role models for their society, which openly aimed at establishing a colonialist empire, or at least to spread English civility, which subsequently could translate into political influence globally. *Catabasis* thus served for the universal goal of building up the English nation, at least in Spenser's work.

In the case of Milton, however, *catabasis* is intended to create chaos and confusion as intended by Satan, assuming a strongly moral and ethical function. In general, then, as Tormey outlines, both writers deviated from the classical concept of *catabasis* as traditionally defined in Virgilian terms, transforming the motif of the underworld travel into a moral, ethical, political, and economic catalyst for innovative perspectives transcending the literary limitations.

In a way, quite similar to the approach pursued by Maha Baddar in her contribution, Aaron French looks at ideas and texts as mediums of travel, in his case pertaining to the bridging of India and Europe via linguistic research focused on the connections between the languages on the sub-continent and Europe, i.e., Indo-European. This was launched by the British philologist William "Oriental"

Jones (1746–1794) who, parallel to, or in concert with, other scholars recognized from the second half of the eighteenth century onward that ancient Sanskrit was actually closely related to the western languages.

Indeed, in this case we face a first truly transcultural phenomenon intimately tied in with the complex of time, space, and travel insofar as the linguistic research indicated that the relationship between the colonizers and the colonialists was much more a matter of equality than of hierarchy. The evidence that was uncovered might allow us to push back the global concept of Orientalism as a theoretical model and consider alternative intellectual approaches through which traditional hierarchical relationships were suddenly replaced by a sense of linguistic equality, based on mutual respect, especially as the Europeans discovered Sanskrit as a powerful language base for Indo-European. While in the past India had been viewed through theological lenses, now linguists peered into a fascinating and highly attractive world of Sanskrit and began to accept it as an equal linguistic partner. Nevertheless, the phenomenon which Edward Said called “Orientalism” (1978), emerged at the same time, but we also recognize that the entire issue pertaining to the racial differentiation in political terms was the result of massive political and economic constructions, whereas in linguistics we perceive a remarkable form of ‘transculturality’ in contrast to Orientalism, as William Jones had already suggested.

Thus, while French does not consider travel as such in the narrow sense of the word, he certainly brings into play the central notion of traveling ideas, research, and concepts, which here merged in a new understanding of historical linguistics focused on the formation and spreading of language families, that is, Indo-European. But Jones also succeeded in disseminating Indian texts to Europe, which thus created a new intellectual forum where representatives of both cultures met. We perceive here a serious critique of ‘Orientalism’ by way of the linguists’ reflection on the commonly shared language and their efforts to make Indian culture known to the West. Whether we might call this ‘transculturality,’ is another issue, but it is clear how much ideas traveled and connected people and cultures across the continents since the early eighteenth century. Ultimately, Jones’s many efforts to translate Sanskrit texts impacted also German Romantics who felt deeply inspired by those literary sources, and themselves then contributed to a merging of both cultural worlds in their own writings. Leaving the negative aspect of ‘Aryanism’ aside, which also developed terribly racist roots in Europe, French presents the remarkable case of ideas traveling across the world and creating a more unified transcultural entity via the notion that there are strong bonds, connections, and relationships among, and a mutually shared basis, in the Indo-European languages.

Finally, rounding off our volume, Allison P. Coudert discusses the way the notions of time, space, and identity were radically transformed in the early modern period to the point that a strange, new disease called ennui began to spread through the male intelligensia. Its symptoms were a feeling of insignificance in a vast, uncaring universe, disgust with the conventions of bourgeois society, and a terrifying sense of disintegration as the self lost control to a demonic “other” lodged within the psyche. Coudert attributes this malaise to the new attitudes toward time, space, and human identity that emerged as a result of the Protestant Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the new economic and political realities accompanying the industrial and political revolutions of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In different ways each of these developments undermined traditional notions of hierarchy and order, thus loosening the bonds binding individuals to each other and to the universe at large.

Coudert sees the engravings of ancient ruins and fantastical prisons by Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778) as emblematic of the sense of loss and confusion experienced by many of his contemporaries and later generations confronted by a universe in which the self could no longer lodge itself meaningfully. As Coudert notes, the imagery provided by Piranesi gained a deep influence on following generations, suggesting that time obliterated even the greatest of civilizations while providing no sure pathway to the future. Although the same period saw tremendous technological advances, these very advances forced many thinking individuals to face new and destabilizing realities. The ever-growing exploration of the world and the universe in the aftermath of the Copernican revolution opened infinite spaces, reducing the human creature to a meaningless speck, a terrifying experience first described by Blaise Pascal and later by Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837), whose pessimistic worldview deeply resonated with his audience. Coudert cites many other witnesses to this epidemic of ennui, emphasizing the dark side of early modernity.

Even though Coudert does not discuss travel in the specific sense of the word, her analysis clearly reveals that since the eighteenth century many people could no longer clearly envision their journey through life and retain a sense of purpose and direction. This, of course, is not the whole story; many others embraced the new universe in which they found themselves and found the limitless possibilities it seemed to offer enchanting. But the mentality of those who could not embrace such optimism deserves close examination for what it tells us about modernity and the loss of certainty and purpose that came with it. It may not be too much of a stretch to suggest that the twenty-first century is so tragically marred by wars, local conflicts, mass shootings, suicide bombing, etc. because of this uncertainty and the attempt to deny and overcome it by violently imposing some new kind of absolutist order.

Our volume thus ends on a cautionary note. While people in the pre-modern age were deeply committed to a cosmic worldview and knew where they were going and why they went on travels/pilgrimages, in the modern era such clarity is harder to come by. But this should not lead us to despair because while certainty may be something many humans desperately desire, it is truly a double-edged sword. One person's or one group's certainty is not everyone's. What characterizes the modern world is uncertainty and ambiguity, but these very factors can themselves be a source of optimism. In an increasingly global and multicultural world the demand for a single universal truth cannot be met. As an increasing number of individuals come to realize this as a result of their own mental and physical travels, we may truly open our minds to the exciting possibilities presented by unfamiliar ideas, customs, and practices so as to restore some spiritual or teleological purpose to those travels.

We are, hopefully, “on the road again,” as Willie Nelson sang in his famous song first in 1980. This was also the motto that we used for our symposium, from which the present volume resulted. In the course of all our research and discussions, we have realized that “travel” proves to be a metaphorical term for the much more fundamental entities determining all human life, that is, time, space, and identity. People travel, ideas travel, objects travel, and even entire cultures travel. This is what this book is all about, to trace our way back to where we started in order to regain an orientation on the map of life. Pre-Modern Studies prove to be insightful and useful in this endeavor, as I would suggest, and as Coudert's analysis of the modern era with its suffering from ennui indicates so impressively. We are currently on the threshold of a more nuanced rediscovery of the past and therefore perhaps closer to another Renaissance in the near future.

Even though Coudert does not discuss travel in the specific sense of the word, her analysis clearly outlines that modern people since the eighteenth century could no longer clearly perceive their way through life and felt at a loss in light of the infinitude of the universe and the endless range of options for the individual. Since we have added to this the exploration of the nanosphere, the twenty-first century is even more in danger than ever before of tumbling along without a specific sense of direction or even purpose. Little wonder, perhaps, that the current situation in 2018 is so tragically determined by wars, local conflicts, mass shootings, and suicide bombing all over the world, with religions, ideologies, economic interests, and cultural values pitted so bitterly against each other. This might explain why the myth of vampires arose in its full dimension only by the nineteenth century (here disregarding medieval antecedents), being the personification of the empty self in death.<sup>114</sup> What do time and space ultimately

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114 Schmitz-Esser, *Der Leichnam* (see note 10), 454–58.

mean for the traveler through life and the world? Asking this question automatically implies the positive answer; without both aspects, there would not be any travel, whether imaginary or physically.

While people in the pre-modern age certainly lived in and embraced a cosmic worldview and so knew fully well where they were going and why they went on travels/pilgrimages, in the modern era, with its endless options and possibilities, none of which then seem to mean much any longer, all space, time, and hence travel become available and hence irrelevant because, as I would sum up, the grounding in spirituality has been lost. Perhaps Douglas Adams's *The Ultimate Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, first a radio broadcast in 1978, printed as a book in 1979, or William Least-Heat Moon's *Blue Highways* published in 1982, have caught this uncanny spirit most fittingly and humorously, and it remains to be seen where we are heading, and what travels we will take in the future, overcoming, maybe, the terrible ennui and melancholy of Charles Baudelaire and Edgar Allan Poe, among many others, perhaps even returning to the travel experience of the Middle Ages.

None of this should lead us to despair because while certainty may be something many human beings desperately desire, it is truly a double-edged sword. One person's or one group's certainty is not everyone's. What characterizes the modern world is uncertainty and ambiguity, but these very factors can themselves be a source of optimism. In an increasingly global and multicultural world, the demand for a single universal truth cannot be met. As a growing number of individuals come to realize this as a result of their own mental and physical travels, we may truly open our minds to the exciting possibilities presented by unfamiliar ideas, customs, and practices, as Zygmunt Bauman has recently argued, though he was not to see the publication of his last book. For him, like so many other recent intellectuals, especially Pope Francis, whom he quotes at length, hope rests in dialogue and mutual respect, which are basic principles of tolerance.<sup>115</sup>

However, we should not simply glorify the past and contrast that with the present. Already medieval people were, despite their deep Christian faith, often at a loss about their own directions and struggled hard to find their way through an opaque world. Parzival in Wolfram von Eschenbach's eponymous romance (ca. 1205), for instance, confesses to his uncle Trevrizent, "Only now . . . do I

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<sup>115</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2017); he concludes: "we face either joining hands, or common graves" (97). For a positive and then a negative review, see <https://www.theoryculturesociety.org/review-zygmunt-bauman-retrotopia/>; <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/retrotopia-review-a-heavyweight-thinker-s-flawed-last-work-1.3075548> (both last accessed on Feb. 21, 2018).

realize how long I have been wandering with no sense of direction and unsustained by any happy feelings. Happiness for me is but a dream: I bear a heavy pack of grief.”<sup>116</sup>

We also observed above the same treatment of human destiny in the alliterative romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, but both here and in *Parzival* the protagonist finds his way through the labyrinth and reaches, as Dante the pilgrim does, the way back to God.<sup>117</sup> Little wonder that the entire notion of pilgrimage, as it had developed in the early Middle Ages, continues to appeal to us today, perhaps more than ever before, because we understand how much the meaning of life can only be understood and realized if we take the road toward our most intimate and ultimate goal, although our greatest fear today seems to be about the unknown future, which colors the perception of our present.<sup>118</sup> For many medieval writers the metaphors of the forest or the river captured the ineffable idea of life’s travel most meaningfully, as the anonymous twelfth-century *Descriptio poistionis seu situationis monasterii Clarae-vallenis*, among many other examples, illustrates rather intriguingly.<sup>119</sup>

The past is waiting for us today, indeed, so that we can build the future.<sup>120</sup> Focusing on travel experiences that have always taken people through time and space makes it possible to recognize how cultures and identities formed and were shaped by others. In the articles that follow below the notion of ‘travel’ is

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**116** Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, trans. A. T. Hatto (London: Penguin, 1980), 235; this is Book 9, ch. 469, vv. 28–30 to ch. 470, v. 2; Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival: Studienausgabe*. Mittelhochdeutscher Text nach der sechsten Ausgabe von Karl Lachmann. Übersetzung von Peter Knecht, Einführung zum Text von Bernd Schirok (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998).

**117** For global perspectives on the labyrinth, see Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1990). She does not, however, engage with Wolfram’s *Parzival*; yet she includes a few literary examples, such as the *Gesta Romanorum* and *La Queste del Saint Graal*.

**118** Zygmunt Baumann, *Retrotopia* (see note 115), 87.

**119** James L. Smith, *Water in Medieval Intellectual Culture* (see note 21), 143–75; as to the metaphor of the forest, see now Albrecht Classen, *The Forest in Medieval German Literature: Ecocritical Readings from a Historical Perspective*. Ecocritical Theory and Practice (Lanham, MD, Boulder, CO, et al.: Lexington Books, 2015).

**120** *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. Past and Present Publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora. Conflits et partages (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992); *The Future of the Middle Ages: Medieval Literature in the 1990s*, ed. William O. Paden (Gainesville, Tallahassee, et al.: University Press of Florida, 1994); *Modernes Mittelalter: Neue Bilder einer populären Epoche*, ed. Joachim Heinzle (Frankfurt a. M.: Insel Verlag, 1994); *Konstruktion der Gegenwart und Zukunft = Shaping the Present and the Future*, ed. Rudolf Suntrup and Jan R. Veenstra. Medieval to Early Modern Culture, 10 (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2008).

understood sometimes quite literally, but at other times also more metaphorically, and then we also face intriguing situations of texts and ideas traveling through space.

I hope that both this introduction and the summaries contribute to the creation of an intellectual patchwork in which the various, at times rather diverse concepts of time, space, and travel merge and create a harmonious entity. During the May 2017 symposium, we already enjoyed extensive and intensive exchanges of ideas, listened to each other, and commented on the various contributions. During the editing process, this communication continued and allowed us to deepen the conversations across disciplines and historical periods. I am particularly pleased to have had the privilege of collaborating with three outstanding Arab scholars whose insights and remarks were most valuable and allow us to continue our efforts to globalize Medieval and Early Modern Studies. We are on the road again, as Nelson sang, and as our medieval predecessors fully understood as well, and on that road we encounter many different voices, ideas, and experiences. I would be very pleased if the summaries indeed make it possible for the reader to recognize the connections among the individual papers, as I have systematically tried to point out similarities, parallels, or matching phenomena across time, cultures, and languages.

Last but not the least, it is my great pleasure to express my gratitude to all the contributors for their outstanding work, their receptiveness toward my challenging questions, and my constant probing as editor.

The editorial staff at Walter de Gruyter in Berlin was, as usual, enormously helpful and supportive, so I am most happy to see this volume appear in our series “Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture,” which by now has already grown well over twenty volumes. The original symposium upon which this collection of articles was based took place at The University of Arizona, Tucson, in May 2017. Not all presentations translated into submissions to this volume, but all contributions ultimately included have proven to be stellar scholarship addressing the central topic of ‘travel’ either very directly or in more abstract terms, all of us trying hard to reach new theoretical, methodological, and interpretive shores in the examination of what travel could broadly mean from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. To be sure, the present collection comprises a wide range of approaches from many different historical periods. While there was no intention of creating any sort of sense of completion, here I present the results of intensive interdisciplinary exchanges involving medievalists, Renaissance specialists, and early modernists working in a variety of research fields.

I am very thankful to many people and offices helping us to make this a reality. Financially, we received support from the Department of German Studies, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Department of French and



Italian, the Dean's Office of the College of Humanities, the School of International Languages, Literatures, and Culture (SILLC), and from the University of Arizona Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation Committee (UAMARRC) (all University of Arizona), for which I am deeply grateful. I also very much appreciate the support from the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (ACMRS) at Arizona State University in Tempe.

My intrepid co-editor of the series, Marilyn Sandidge (Westfield State University, MA), and numerous colleagues involved in the present project provided most helpful feedback and comments, especially Anne Scott (Northern Arizona University), Na'ama Shulman (Shenkar College of Engineering, Design, and Art in Ramat-Gan, Israel), Sally Abad (University of Alexandria, Egypt), and Thomas Willard (University of Arizona). The papers collected here went through an intensive peer-reviewing process, and everyone involved helped tremendously in the shared scholarly exchange and learning experience.

It is always very appropriate to express my appreciation for the Library of The University of Arizona and its great collection, certainly at a world-class level, and its untiring support for research, particularly in my case. I would also like to thank my Ph.D. student Carolin Radtke for her wonderful help during the symposium, where she volunteered in many small and large matters without having been asked. She and I exchanged many ideas and shared information over the last months: she, preparing herself for her Ph.D. prospectus focused on late medieval and early modern German travel writing, and I, developing this introduction and editing the volume. She had given a short presentation at our symposium, but she opted out of contributing to this book in order to concentrate on her doctoral dissertation. The staff of our School of International Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (SILLC) has been a great support as well, in particular our business manager, Gennady Sare, who helped me with all financial matters.

Finally, and most importantly, however, I would like to dedicate this volume to my son Stephan M. Classen and his wife, Jessica, particularly because she was expecting during the time when this book reached its completion, and hence also to little Sophie Classen, born on April 8, 2018.

Lisa M. C. Weston

## A Vicarious Voyage in Queer Time: Hygeburg's *Hodoeporicon*

Hygeburg (alternatively Hygeburc, Hugeberc or Huneberc) of Heidenheim was one of many educated women who followed Saint Boniface across the Channel from England to Germany in the mid-eighth century. Of her two linked *vitae* of the brothers Willibald and Wynnebald – the only surviving Carolingian saints' lives by a female hagiographer – the first, commonly called the *Hodoeporicon* or “Narrative of a Voyage,” offers a rare glimpse into the experiences of an Anglo-Saxon pilgrim to the Holy Land.<sup>1</sup> Such a narrative discloses the function of pilgrimage texts in predominantly stable monastic communities. But the *Hodoeporicon* does more: constituting an intriguing vicarious journey shared by the hagiographer with the saint, it reveals and problematizes interconnections between and among literacy and gender, sexuality and temporality.

The bonds between members of the disparate and multi-generational group usually called the Boniface Circle were based in blood kinship: most of the missionaries, including both Hygeburg and the brothers about whom she writes, belonged to a few families with dynastic roots and connections in Southern England. But that connection was strengthened through the synthetic kinship of monastic community. The Circle sustained those connections, sometimes over great distances, through the exchange of texts. Of the 150 or so letters compiled and copied some time later (today housed in Vienna, Nationalbibliothek Lat. 751), the majority document Boniface's work as missionary and bishop, and these have an intrinsic historical and documentary interest. Increasingly, however, modern literary critical attention has begun to turn to those that witness Boniface as a member of a literary network, a textual community maintained in the face of physical (and to some extent temporal) absence through common tropes and intertextualities and a shared stylistic register.<sup>2</sup> The number of women participating in the

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1 The text acquired the (sub)title “Hodoeporicon” from its eighteenth-century editor, H. Canisius. *Vitae Willibaldi et Wynnebalidi auctore sanctimoniali Heidenheimensi*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores*, XV (Hanover: Hahn, 1887), 80–117; here 81.

2 See, for example, Emily V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), especially 200–08. See also Andy Orchard, “Old Sources, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001): 15–38. Orchard argues for the creation among the Circle's writers of a shared formulaic style based

epistolary exchanges, moreover, testifies to early medieval women's engagement with monastic literacy.<sup>3</sup>

Given the realities of the writers' separation, it is hardly surprising that the consequences of travel – whether pilgrimage or missionary migration – for both the travelers and those left at home recur as a theme in the letters. Writing to Boniface, Egburga remembers and laments the absence of her sister Wethburga, now living as a recluse in Rome.<sup>4</sup> Two other monastic women, Eangyth and her daughter Heaburg, express their desire to go on pilgrimage, and some time later Boniface replies to Heaburg, relaying Wethburga's advice that she wait out the threat of the Saracens then active in the Mediterranean.<sup>5</sup> In an even more utilitarian letter, Abbess Ælfléd writes from Whitby to Abbess Adola of Pfulzel to request support and aid for one of her household traveling to Rome.<sup>6</sup> More often, however, absence because of pilgrimage or missionary migration becomes emotionally equivalent to that caused by exile or death, and the letters are filled with grief and longing for those no longer physically present. Both her sister's absence and her brother's death leave Egburga desolate and seemingly kin- and friendless in this world. Eangyth and Heaburg have also lost close kin either to death or

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on allusions and borrowings from Aldhelm and older Roman Latin authors in the Anglo-Saxon curriculum. Like Aldhelm, Boniface was himself the author of a grammar and of work on Latin metrics as well as a body of poetry.

3 Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of texts from Perpetua to Marguerite Poirete* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), especially 30–33; Ursula Schaefer, "Two Women in Need of a Friend," *Germanic Dialects: Linguistic and Philological Investigations*, ed. Bela Brogyani and Thomas Krommelbein (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: J. Benjamins, 1986), 491–524; Albrecht Classen, "Frauenbriefe an Bonifatius: Frühmittelalterliche Literaturdenkmäler aus moderner mentalitätsgeschichtlicher Sicht," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 72 (1990): 251–73; Christine Fell, "Some Implications of the Boniface Correspondence," *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. Helen Damico and Alexandra H. Olsen (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 29–43; D. Patricia Wallace, "Feminine Rhetoric and the Epistolary Tradition: The Boniface Correspondence," *Women's Studies* 24 (1995): 229–46; and Barbara Yorke, "The Bonifacian Mission and Female Religious in Wessex," *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998): 145–72. For a more general overview, see Joan M. Ferrante, *To the Glory of her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), especially 10–35.

4 *Die Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, ed. Michael Tangl. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epistolae Selectae I* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955), Letter 13, pp. 18–21.

5 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letters 14 and 27, pp. 21–26 and 47–49. On the political and social contexts of pilgrimage during this period, see Klaus Guth, "Heiliglandfahrt in frühislamischer Zeit: Willibald von Eichstätt zum Gedenken," *Recherches de theologie ancienne et medievale* 56 (1989): 5–18; and Yitzak Hen, "Holy Land Pilgrims from Frankish Gaul," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 76 (1998): 291–306.

6 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letter 8, pp. 3–4.

because they “*equoreis campis se crediderunt*” (have entrusted themselves to the pathways of the sea).<sup>7</sup>

Sometimes it is unclear whether it is the one who has left or the one left behind who is the exile. For Denehard, Lull, and Burchard writing (as a group) to Abbess Cuniburg and requesting her friendship and prayers, their missionary presence in Germany is a kind of exile after the death of parents and relatives.<sup>8</sup> Berhtgyth writes to her brother Balthard in three letters in rhythmic prose filled with the language of exile and longing, lamenting his absence as well as the death of other kindred.<sup>9</sup> The imagery of exile and tribulation in such letters is often that of a stormy sea, reflecting especially the reality of the Channel separating many of the correspondents from either missionaries or pilgrims. Egburga, for example, longs for Boniface’s friendship (and his letters) just as a storm-tossed sailor longs for the shore. For Eangyth and Heaburg the troubles besetting them in the absence of kinsmen to support and defend them resemble “*spumosi maris vortices*” (the whirlpools of a foaming sea), “*undarum cumulos conlisis saxis*” (mountainous waves dashing on rocks), and an ocean lashed by “*ventorum violentia tempestates*” (violent tempests of wind).<sup>10</sup>

Against such longing the letters thematize friendship and construct a staunchly supportive community based in textual exchange. Manuscripts pass back and forth with the letters. Heaburg promises Boniface a copy of the “Sufferings of the Martyrs.”<sup>11</sup> Boniface thanks Eadburga for the books she has sent him, and later requests that she send him a copy of the Epistles of Saint Peter illuminated in gold.<sup>12</sup> He also requests books from his former student Duddo.<sup>13</sup> He writes to Bishop Daniel of Winchester, asking for the copy of the Book of the Prophets bequeathed by Abbot Winbert, and to both Egbert of York and Huetbert of Wearmouth-Jarrow for the works of Bede.<sup>14</sup> Nor is Boniface the only missionary desirous of books: Lull asks Dealwine for the works of Aldhelm as consolation in his missionary “exile.”<sup>15</sup>

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7 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), 24; translation from Ephraim Emerton, *The Letters of Saint Boniface* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 38.

8 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letter 49, pp. 78–80.

9 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letters 143, 147 and 148, pp. 282, 284–85, and 285–77. Since both Berhtgyth and Balthard were cousins of Lull, and had migrated with other family members including their mother, the tropes may express some exaggeration.

10 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), 22; translations mine.

11 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letter 15, pp. 26–28.

12 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letters 30 and 35, pp. 54 and 60.

13 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letter 34, p. 59.

14 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letter 63, p. 132, and Letters 75 and 76, pp. 156–58 and 158–59.

15 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letter 72, p. 144.

These volumes have, of course, a practical value: both Boniface and Lull are engaged in founding churches and establishing monastic schools, and such places require books. Beyond this traffic in manuscripts, however, the literate culture they exemplify and the writing of letters and new texts reify the blood- and synthetic kinship binding the community. Eangyth and Heaburg, mother and daughter, are also monastic women together and never more so than when they write as one to their monastic “brother” Boniface. When the young nun Leoba seeks Boniface’s friendship she cites his previous bonds of both blood kinship and friendship with her parents and his links to her abbess and teacher, but she also demonstrates her right to be part of the textual community by sending him some verses of her own composition in the Circle’s poetic style.<sup>16</sup> The Aldhelmian octosyllabic verses Berhtgyth sends her absent brother offer a substitute for physical proximity even as they express her hope of reuniting with him in heaven.<sup>17</sup>

Constituting what I have called “textual bodies,” the letters provide an emotional presence that almost but not quite overcomes physical absence.<sup>18</sup> Recognizing the gap between presence and absence – indeed, foregrounding that gap – the construction of a textual body allows for complex relationships across bodies, spaces, and time. In fact, the letters themselves sometimes take on physicality, becoming, as they are read, all but corporeal substitutes for their writers. For Egburga, Boniface’s presence-in-absence in a letter thus allows an imagined embrace with an associated sensory response: “sororis tamen semper amplexibus collum tuum constricturo” (I clasp your neck in a sisterly embrace) and her body is filled with a sweetness like that of honey, “quasi quiddam mellitae dulcedinis meis visceribus hic sapor insidet.”<sup>19</sup> A somewhat more restrained Boniface greets Eadburga with his “divino ac virgineo caritatis osculo” (holy and virginal kiss of affection).<sup>20</sup>

Linking literacy and friendship with virginity and chastity in monastic profession, Eangyth and Heaburg likewise salute Boniface by lauding his chastity

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16 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letter 29, pp. 52–53.

17 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letters 147 and 148, pp. 284–85 and 285–87. On Berhtgyth’s poetry, see Jane Stevenson, “Anglo-Latin Women Poets,” *Latin Learning and English Lore*, ed. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe and Andy Orchard. Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge. Toronto Old English Series, 14 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), vol. II, 86–107.

18 Lisa M. C. Weston, “Where Textual Bodies Meet: Anglo-Saxon Women’s Epistolary Friendships,” *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*. Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse ed. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandige. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 6 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 231–46.

19 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), 18–19; translation from *Letters* (see note 7), 34.

20 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letter 65, pp. 137–38.

and virginity. In a letter of consolation to Heaburg, Boniface similarly promises that her virginity will guarantee her reunion in Heaven with those friends from whom she is currently separated by either death or distance.<sup>21</sup> Virginity like literacy is both of and not of one time, one place or even one body, and in the writings of the Boniface Circle – both their correspondence and (as I will argue here) narratives like the *Hodoeporicon* – textual bodies can consequently transcend temporal and corporeal as well as geographical separation.

Hygeburg's career as a nun and a writer is in many ways typical of the women in the Boniface Circle, and her *Hodoeporicon* shares many of the Circle's themes, tropes, and stylistic flourishes.<sup>22</sup> In 761 or so she joined her kinswoman Walburga at Heidenheim, where, most likely under that abbess's patronage, took on the job of writing the double *vitae* of Walburga's brothers – Willibald, pilgrim and bishop of Eichstätt, and Wynnebald, missionary and founding abbot of Heidenheim.<sup>23</sup> Although her gender makes Hygeburg unique among the period's hagiographers, the Saint's Life genre is well-represented in works of the Boniface Circle beyond their letters: second and third generations of the Circle especially produced a number of *vitae* of its deceased founders, including Boniface himself, Lull, Leoba, and Walburga, which extend kinship, community, and memory beyond death.

Anonymous in the text itself, Hygeburg reveals her identity in a cryptogram that appears in the oldest of the four extant manuscripts of her *vitae*, strategically placed between the two lives.<sup>24</sup> The four lines of text constitute a substitution cypher, with numbers (written out as abbreviated words) standing in for vowels. Deciphered it proclaims “ego una saxonica nomine Hugeburc ordinando hec scribabam.” The cypher is of a common Bonifatian type, very much in the textual tradition of Fulda and other Bonifatian foundations.<sup>25</sup> Hygeburg's

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<sup>21</sup> *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letter 94, pp. 214–15.

<sup>22</sup> On Hygeburg's work and place in the Boniface Circle, see also Pauline Head, “Who is the Nun from Heidenheim? A Study of Hugeburc's Vita Willibaldi,” *Medium Ævum* 71 (2002): 29–46; Patricia Ranft, *Women in Western Intellectual Culture 600–1500* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), especially 6–10; and Rosalind Love, “Insular Latin Literature to 900,” *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, ed. Clare Lees (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 120–57; especially 149–50.

<sup>23</sup> Both Heidenheim, founded on the site of the Roman military settlement of Aquileia (not to be confused with Aquileia in Friaul, or northern Italy, today near Venice), and Eichstätt are located in what were Swabia and Franconia and are now southern Germany.

<sup>24</sup> Bernhard Bischoff, “Wer ist die Nonne von Heidenheim?” *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens* 49 (1931): 387–88.

<sup>25</sup> On the Circle's interests in cryptography, Wilhelm Levison, “Saint Boniface and cryptography” in his *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century*. The Ford Lectures delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term, 1943 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946), 190–94.

paradoxical anonymity and disclosure renders her voice in the text both self-effacing and self-asserting.

At times, indeed, biography becomes autobiography – albeit obliquely so – particularly in her treatment of the monastic experience common to her and her hagiographic subjects. Although Hygeburg's text embraces the whole of Willibald's life from his birth circa 700 and ends with his career as Bishop (after 742), it focuses particularly on his experiences as a pilgrim first to Rome (in 722) and then on to the Holy Land. Explicitly basing the text in Willibald's own accounts of his travels, the *Hodoeporicon* engages with the differences between oral and written testimony and with the concomitant transformation of individual into shared experience.

Willibald's spoken words become Hygeburg's written ones, and those written words can then further transcend the temporal distance between the writer and those to whom she directs her text. By doing so, Willibald's journey becomes a vicarious one for both Hygeburg herself and her readers, contemporary and future. The *Hodoeporicon* turns into a textual body that transcends the differences of gender and generation.

Something of the same compositional strategy – an auditor-turned-author transmutes the oral report of a pilgrim into a written account – operates in Adomnán's *de Locis Sanctis*, which incorporates the narrative of a Gaulish bishop, Arculf, who made a very similar journey to the Holy Land circa 670. While Adomnán cites Arculf's own words directly, he supplements that testimony, drawing on the riches of his monastery at Iona for previous texts describing the Holy Places. Adomnán does not to any great extent convey – let alone participate in – Arculf's personal experiences or emotional reactions to what he had seen; his text seeks rather to make distant but spiritually and culturally significant places available for those far away, to bridge the distance separating Iona and Britain, at the margins of the European Christian world, from the Rome and Jerusalem at its center.<sup>26</sup> To this end he also augments the narrative with detailed architectural diagrams that make possible their reconstruction either in stone or in imagination as an aid to their visualization and exegesis.

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<sup>26</sup> On Adomnán's text, purpose, and sources, see Thomas O'Loughlin, *Adomnán and the Holy Places: the Perceptions of an Insular Monk on the Locations of the Biblical Drama* (London: T & T Clark, 2007); "The Presence of the Breviarus de Hierosolyma in Iona's Library," *Eriu* 62 (2012): 185–88; "The Exegetical Purpose of Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 24 (1993): 37–53; "Res, tempus, locus, persona: Adomnán's Exegetical Method," *Innes Review* 48 (1997): 95–111; and "De locis sanctis as a 'Liturgical Text'," *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, Lawmaker, Peacemaker*, ed. Jonathon Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts, 2010), 181–92; and David Woods, "Arculf's Luggage: the Sources for Adomnán's 'De Locis Sanctis'," *Eriu* 52 (2002): 25–52.

An exegetical intent also pervades Bede's reworking of Adomnán's text in his own *de Locis Sanctis*, probably written to aid his students at Wearmouth-Jarrow in imagining the places they read about in Scripture.<sup>27</sup> As Peter Darby and Daniel Reynolds note, Bede's epitome re-orders Adomnán's text.

Whereas Adomnán begins with Jerusalem as a walled city – invoking Psalm 48's command to consider the walls of Zion and tell the next generation about them – Bede begins with the Martyrium, Golgotha, and the Holy Sepulcher and ends with the fragments of Constantinople's Hagia Sophia, sites that foreground the Passion and the Resurrection.<sup>28</sup> Some form of *de Locis Sanctis* – either Adomnán's original or Bede's rendering – likely constitutes an analogue and model for Hygeburg's text, even as it perhaps prompted and shaped Willibald's journey, a possibility suggested by his itinerary as well as her descriptions of sites such as the church of the Holy Sepulcher. But far more than Adomnán, Hygeburg participates imaginatively and emotionally in the pilgrimage she renders into text.

Ora Limor argues that Willibald's narrative sharing of his travels – and that of Adomnán's Arculf as well – constitutes an essential part of his re-integration into monastic community, foreclosing the liminality of the pilgrimage.<sup>29</sup> What is also at stake in both narratives, however, is the way the pilgrim's journeys become the property of their reception communities, and the uses to which those communities can subsequently turn those journeys. In this transformation the authors of the narratives – and it is significant that the authors are originally auditors, and not the pilgrims themselves – play key roles as mediators. Limor's analysis and her paradigm – mediated narrative as a necessary step in re-integration after a liminal experience – applies more fully, in fact, in the narrative of a different kind of journey: Boniface's textual rendering of the visions of an anonymous monk of Much Wenlock. (The comparison is not as far-fetched as it might initially appear: both Willibald and Arculf end their pilgrimages with a visit to the island

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<sup>27</sup> Patrick P. O'Neill, "Imag(in)ing the Holy Places: A Comparison between the Diagrams in Adomnán's and Bede's *De locis sanctis*," *Journal of Literary Onomastics* 6 (2017): 42–60. Bede also praises Adomnán and refers briefly to his own epitome as well as Adomnán's original in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Book 5, chapters 15–17). *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 504–13.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Darby and Daniel Reynolds, "Reassessing the 'Jerusalem Pilgrims': the Case of Bede's *De locis sanctis*," *Bulletin for the Council for British Research in the Levant* 9 (2014): 27–31. Darby and Reynolds also note archaeological evidence for local Christian cult sites unmentioned and probably unvisited by Western pilgrims, suggesting that previous pilgrimage accounts often set the itineraries for later travelers.

<sup>29</sup> Ora Limor, "Pilgrims and Authors: Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis* and Hyeburg's *Hodoeporicon Sancti Willibaldi*," *Revue Benedictine* 114 (2004): 253–75.



of Volcano, off the coast of Sicily, which Willibald describes in some detail as an entrance to Hell.)

In this case, moreover, that monk's otherworldly experiences, his journey through Hell, become part of the shared experience of the Boniface Circle not only by being related orally within his home monastery, but also by being shared – probably in no longer extant letters – between Abbess Milburga of Much Wenlock and Abbess Hildilith of Barking (and perhaps other abbesses of other communities in Southern England) before finally being vetted and authorized by Boniface himself in a letter to Abbess Eadburga of Wimbourne.<sup>30</sup> In this text, of course, the vision matters far more than the visionary, even as Boniface's authority eclipses that of any of the abbesses and privileges his narrative transformation of the vision.

Willibald, on the other hand, Bishop and Saint, is at least equally if not more important than his journey, and the relations between gender and power are potentially more problematic in Hygeburg's textualization of his life. The *Hodoeporicon* represents the rare incursion by a female author into – and even in some respects an appropriation of – male experience, and moreover the experience of a male of higher status. Her Prologue addresses her text specifically “ad omnibus presbiteris seu diaconibus et omnibus aecclesiastici regiminis proceribus” (priests, deacons, and princes of the ecclesiastical order), that is, to men, many of them of rank superior to her own, as a speaking in place of a Willibald noted for his pastoral care.<sup>31</sup>

Although she will later merge with her audience in a communal “we” listening to Willibald's words, initially her female “I” stands distinct from the male “you” she addresses. This she does explicitly as a woman, “feminea fragilique sexus imbecillitate corruptibilia, nulla prerogative sapientiae suffultus aut magnarum virium industria elata” (stained by the frailty and weakness of my sex and supported neither by pretense to wisdom nor by exalted aspiration to great power).<sup>32</sup>

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30 *Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (see note 4), Letter 10, 7–15. Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England 600–800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 209, argues convincingly that Eadburga should be identified as Abbess of Wimbourne (where both Hygeburg's Abbess Walburga and Leoba were educated) rather than Minster-in-Thanel (as in Tangl, *Briefe*). On the vision of the Monk of Much Wenlock, see Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), especially 85–110.

31 *Vitae* (see note 1), 86; translated by C. H. Talbot, “The *Hodoeporicon* of Saint Willibald,” *Soldiers of Christ. Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and Thomas Head (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1995), 139–64, here 143.

32 *Vitae* (see note 1), 86; “*Hodoeporicon*” (see note 31), 144.

What enables and empowers her composition is her blood kinship with her subject: “sed qui me, indignam tamen, de illorum genealogii sturpe aliunde propagatam, forte de extremis ramorum cauliculis” (although I am an unworthy woman, I know that I have flowered from the same genealogical root ... albeit from the lowest stalks of its branches).<sup>33</sup> As blood kin she can rightfully commemorate his deeds, journeys, and miracles, and indeed all the more so if she is also writing on behalf of his sister Walburga.

Her blood kinship allows her to tell his story, that is, but so too – despite her seeming disavowal of learning – does her mastery of the literacy fundamental to the synthetic kinship of monastic community as demonstrated in both her presentation of herself as author and her narrative of Willibald’s life. Framing the saint’s oral testimony, Hygeburg effectively asserts her literacy, her participation in literate monastic culture. Even as Hygeburg offers the journey narrative in relatively simple and conversational prose, as the words of Willibald himself, the elaborate literary style of her prologue suggests significant intervention on her part.<sup>34</sup>

Her prologue, for example, ends by describing her writings as “per albas camporum planities sulcato tramite nigra perarata pinne vestigial” (black tracks ploughed by a pen in a furrowed path on the white plains of these fields) of parchment.<sup>35</sup> This complex metaphorical flourish, draws specifically on Aldhelm’s Riddle 59 (Pen) for both its image and its vocabulary. Her words follow especially three lines of his poem:

Pergo per albescentes directo tramite campos  
Canentiquae viae vestigial caerulea linquo  
Lucida nigratis fuscans anfractibus arva.

[I move through whitened fields in a straight line and leave dark-colored traces on the glistening path, darkening the shining fields with my blackened meanderings.]<sup>36</sup>

Aldhelm was a particular model for writers in the Boniface Circle, and his words echo elsewhere throughout Hygeburg’s text. She concludes the *vita* as a whole with a description of Willibald’s actions as both pilgrim and evangelizing bishop:

<sup>33</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 87; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 145.

<sup>34</sup> Love, “Insular Latin Literature,” (see note 22), especially 149–50. See Eva Gottscaller, *Hygeburg von Heidenheim: philologische Untersuchungen zu den Heiligenbiographien einer Nonne des achten Jahrhunderts*. Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissance-Forschung, 8 (Munich: Arbo-Gesellschaft, 1973), for a detailed study of Hygeburg’s Latin proficiency.

<sup>35</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 88; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 145.

<sup>36</sup> *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Rspall out. Ehwald. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum XV (Berlin: Weidmann, 1961), 124, ll. 3–5. *Aldhelm. The Poetic Works*, trans. Michael Lapidge and James Rosier (1985; Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), 82.

sic apis prudentissima, que per purpura violarium virecta et per fulvas frondosorum flosculos et per olida holerum florida loetalem liquantes toxicam et suavissimum sorbentes sucum nectaris, et sic cruribus et toto corpore referta ad alvearii gestando properat.

[Like a busy bee that flits through the meadows, purple with violets, aromatic with scented herbs and through the tree branches yellow with blossom, drinking the sweet nectar but avoiding bitter poison, and returns to the hive bearing honey on its thighs and body) he chose and adopted the best practices he had seen on his travels.]<sup>37</sup>

Both the vocabulary and the image of this passage echo Aldhelm's metaphor of bees as model monastic subjects in his *Prosa de Virginitate*. There the bees "melligeris caltarum frondibus seu purpureis maliarum floribus incubantes mulsasticidia ... decerpunt" (settling on honey-bearing petals of marsh-marigolds or the purple flowers of mallows, gather honeyed drops of nectar) and carry them home to their hives in the "numerosis cruarum ... oneribus" (in the numerous loadings of their thighs).<sup>38</sup> Aldhelm's original use of the image pertains most specifically to the women of Barking Abbey and elsewhere in southern England, to whom the *de Virginitate* is addressed – in other words, to women like Hygeburg herself. Describing Willibald, then, Hygeburg is also implicitly commenting on her own gatherings and appropriations. Like the bees and the women Aldhelm addresses, she compiles her text as one might pluck a few things "ex multis frondosum fugiferumque arborum florum" (from many trees rich in foliage and fruit).<sup>39</sup> Her composition being a compilation, it requires her to "excerpere compagare edissereque" (pluck, collect and display) texts and models she shares with her readers.<sup>40</sup>

Hygeburg's Aldhelmian style extends beyond specific verbal borrowings to a pervasive elaboration and ornamentation. As the passages above suggest, she employs extended alliterative sequences. Elsewhere, too, Willibald is "fide robustus, fata fortunatus procaciter peragrans, Omnia visitando repperiebat atque videbat" (strengthened by faith, fortunate in his fate, a bold traveller, [who] transmitted all he saw and learned while visiting those places).<sup>41</sup> She employs

<sup>37</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 105–06; "Hodoeporicon" (see note 31), 164.

<sup>38</sup> Aldhelmi Malmesbiriensis *Prosa de Virginitate*, ed. Scott Gwara. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, A, CXXIV (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 51. Aldhelm. *The Prose Works*, trans. Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (1979; Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), 61. The phrase *apis prudentissima* borrows from (a different) Willibald's *Life of Saint Boniface*, there *prudētissimae apis* also uses Aldhelm's metaphor of the bee. *Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldo*, ed. Wilhelm Levison. Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores, II (Hanover: Hahn, 1829), 331–53, here 340.

<sup>39</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 86; "Hodoeporicon" (see note 31), 144.

<sup>40</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 87; "Hodoeporicon" (see note 31), 144.

<sup>41</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 86; "Hodoeporicon" (see note 31), 144

formulaic phrases – “cumque inluster ille” ... “postquam ille” ... “postquam ille inluster” – mixing and re-mixing them to mark chapter openings.<sup>42</sup>

She loads her sentences with catalogue-like lists of parallel modifiers, as when the pilgrim’s passage through Italy takes them “per concava valium, per abrupta montium, per plana campestrium” (through the deep valleys, over the craggy mountains, across level plains).<sup>43</sup> Embarking for the Continent from Southampton, their voyage transpires in a series of echoing phrases, “naulo impenso, circio flante, ponte pollente, remigiis crepitantis, classis clamantibus” (having paid their fares ... with the west wind blowing and a high sea running, amid the shouting of sailors and the creaking of oars).<sup>44</sup> Some of the imagery here recalls that of the Boniface letters’ invocation of voyages, even as the sensory details may well be drawn from her own memories of a cross-Channel journey. Hygeburg’s intervention, her mediation in the sharing of both words and experiences, thus allows her to conjoin multiple bodies within one textual body.

Her presentation of Willibald’s career begins with his entry into monastic life, when his parents offered him as a child to the abbey of Waldheim (Bishop’s Waltham, Hampshire) in gratitude to God for curing him of a severe illness. Here too biography elides with autobiography, and her depiction of the saint’s education recalls her own, at least in some regards. At the abbey he (like numerous other saints in numerous other *vitae*, including those of Leoba and Walburga at Wimbourne)

sacris litterarum studiis inbutos atque eruditus, sacras Davitici carminis paginas sollerte mentis intentione peragrans, sed et etiam alios divinae legis agiosgraphiorum armariolas indagando sive legend procaciter ille sensuu sophirus, mente moderatus indagabat, et tamen non adhuc plurimorum etate annorum grandevus, sed, sicut divina semper supernae pietatis clementia agree solet, ut secundum poeticum prophetarum vaticinio ex ore inditium ceu lactantium perficere sibi solet laudem.

[Gave careful and assiduous attention to the learning of the psalms and applied his mind to the examination of the other books of Sacred Scripture. Young though he was in age, he was advanced in wisdom, so that through him the divine mercy the words of the prophet were fulfilled: ‘By the mouth of babes and infants, thou hast founded a bulwark.’]<sup>45</sup>

The quotation of Psalm 8.2 may covertly comment on Hygeburg’s own youthfulness. It certainly resonates with her ostensible humility and her previous demurs about her skill and worthiness as a hagiographer.

<sup>42</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 89, 90, 92.

<sup>43</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 91; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 149.

<sup>44</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 91; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 149.

<sup>45</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 89; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 147.

Entrance into monastic community, linked as it is with acquisition of literacy, confounds distinctions between now and then, here and there, allowing an at least temporary “disappearance” of gendered individuality in “group” identity and style. Willibald, she continues, “die noctuque sollicite volutabat, quomodo illorum se intercopularet casta monachorum clientello, aut qualiter illorum faustis interfere possit familiaris vitae disciplinis” (night and day he pondered anxiously on the means of monastic perfection and the importance of community life, wondering how he might become a member of that chaste fellowship and share in the joys of their common discipline).<sup>46</sup> The same might be said of Hygeburg herself, or of any entrant into monastic community. In the event, this search leads Willibald “immanissimas maris discriminare ... aequores” (to brave the perils of the pathless sea), even as Hygeburg herself would later do in going to Germany.<sup>47</sup> Willibald is, of course, more far-travelling, at least in the flesh, than his hagiographer.

With a small group of companions – including significantly his father (who dies en route) and his unmarried brother Wynnebald (who will later found Hygeburg's own abbey of Heidenheim) – he sets out on a pilgrimage to Rome. Willibald's desire to travel with his family reminds us that many of the Boniface Circle (including Hygeburg) journeyed to Germany either with other family members or in order to join friends and relatives already there, and that the core of their mission, moreover, was a desire to convert more distant kin, the Continental Saxons from whom the English Saxons claimed their origins.

Repeatedly posed against and subsumed within the stability and discipline of monastic community, however, Willibald's pilgrimage is also figured as a more strenuous asceticism, as a kind of exile:

Postquam ille inluster clarusque Christi cruciolus magna mentis intentione et cordis contemplation ad superna internis vitae speculatione provide cirmspectione properabat et ad sublimioris rigidioris vitae virtutibus anhelando, iam non plano, sed arctam austerioris vitae viam per monachialis vite normam inhiando desiderabat et maiorum iam tunc peregrinationis ignotitiam adire optabat.

[After this the celebrated bearer of Christ's Cross had continued to pursue the life of perfection with great steadfastness of mind and inward contemplation, he grew eager to follow a stricter mode of life. A more austere and rigorous observance of the monastic way of life, not an easier one, was what he most desired. He longed to go on pilgrimage to a more remote and less well-known place.]<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 89; “*Hodoeporicon*” (see note 31), 147.

<sup>47</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 90; “*Hodoeporicon*” (see note 31), 148.

<sup>48</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 92; “*Hodoeporicon*” (see note 31), 150.

Although Rome (and eventually Jerusalem) can hardly be said to be “less well-known” than a Hampshire monastery, Willibald’s desire equates pilgrimage with withdrawal to an anchoritic life. More distance equals more rigor: his journey literalizes what remains a metaphor (devout life within the monastic community as pilgrimage from the secular world) for his author and audience.

The similarities – and differences – between the pilgrim, his audience(s), and his hagiographer are further at issue as the multiple grammatical subjects identified in the prologue mingle – indeed, blur – in the text of the journey. There is a “he” – Willibald – who in the narrative is sometimes expanded into a “they” – the group of traveling companions. And there is an “I” – Hygeburg herself – as well as a “we” – the group of those (including Hygeburg) who heard Willibald’s story from his own lips, on Tuesday the 23rd of June (probably 778). (This group sometimes seems to expand, moreover, to include those who are later reading the text.) Yet “they” overlaps with “we” in ways that complicate and problematize identity and time, as when, for example, “ibi morabant unam noctem inter duabus fontibus, et pastores dabant nobis acrum lac bibere” (they ... came to the spot where two fountains, Jor and Dan, spring from the earth and then pour down the mountainside to form the river Jordan. There, between the two fountains, they passed the night and the shepherds gave us sour milk to drink).<sup>49</sup> In an evocatively metaphorical moment, “they” in the past and “we” in the present unite in one community where/when the two streams come together to form the river Jordan.

This shift, this invocation of a travelling “we” as narrator, may (of course) constitute a mistake; it may, that is, represent a verbatim repetition of Willibald’s words. But it may, alternatively, mark the hagiographer’s more active imaginative intervention in the developing narrative. Ostensibly presenting Willibald and his group of companions as its narrator, the text’s inclusive “we” may also enfold Hygeburg herself into the narrative as more than an otherwise anonymously passive audience member.

Even as a “mistake,” however, this shift from third to first person speaks to Hygeburg’s being caught up in the narrative. Willibald’s travails may have struck a chord with her own memories, prompting a vicarious identification that allows those speaker(s) and auditor(s) to merge and blur. Similarly his curiosity about foreign places and sights – a feature of his narrative – may also speak to Hygeburg’s own curiosity and its role in prompting her own journey from England as well as the attention she affords Willibald’s oral narrative. Indeed, the vicarious nature of the narrative – and its fascination, even obsession, with the difficulties and sufferings of travel – is one of the most marked aspects of the text. The “slip”

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<sup>49</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 96; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 154.

between third and first person is itself followed, for example, by the inclusion of a seemingly random detail:

et ibi sunt armenta mirabilis longo dorso et brevis cruribus, magnis cornibus create; omnes sunt unius coloris, ostreae. Paludes sunt profundus ibi; et quando estuale tempore magna solis caumatio de caelo terram urire solet, illa armenta tollentes se vadunt ad palude et demergant se toto corpore nisi caput solum.

[At this spot there are wonderful herds of cattle, long in the back and short in the leg, bearing enormous horns; they are all of one color, dark red. Deep marshes lie there, and in the summertime, when the great heat of the sun scorches the earth, the herds betake themselves to the marshes and, plunging themselves up to their necks in the water, leave only their heads showing.]<sup>50</sup>

This detail – and though Adomnán's Arculf describes the two sources of the Jordan, he relates nothing of this sort of domestic detail – testifies to Willibald's curiosity and perhaps as well to Hygeburg's.

To some extent, then, the shift from “they” to “us” exemplifies this text's ability to confound time, space, and identity, creating what (for us) resembles queer temporality as theorized by Elizabeth Freeman: time running not in a linear sequence from past to present to future but rather folding back on itself, with “then” repeating “now”, with past and present overlapping with each other and with the future. Bodies, she argues, exist in and through their experience of time, and reify temporal systems aligned with cultural forms and institutions. Freeman thus seeks to draw our attention to “textual moments of asynchrony, anachronism, anastrophe, belatedness” and other disruptions of the “chrononormativity” that organizes human existence in ways she identifies with reproduction, history, and genealogical succession.<sup>51</sup>

Entrance into monastic life, especially as constituted in Hygeburg's text, disrupts secular temporality in a number of ways, even as it also disrupts – or at least complicates – dynastic lines and kinship relations. The repetitions of the monastic offices and the liturgical year complicate the linearity of secular time, even as monastic virginity disrupts dynastic reproductive succession. The literacy that is so much a part of monastic life similarly disrupts both temporality and identity.

This phenomenon is, perhaps, inherent in all texts: in reading (quite literally in the medieval practice of subvocalization) a reader gives voice to the words of another. In Hygeburg's text, “they” becoming “us” means that “we” become companions on Willibald's travels despite temporal and geographical distance.

<sup>50</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 96; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 154.

<sup>51</sup> Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds*. Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), here xxii and 3.

At least two groups of companions, those in the past who accompanied Willibald on his pilgrimage and those in the present of the journey's retelling that will become the text – and perhaps a third group, those in the future of the text who will accompany Willibald (and Hygeburg) by reading the *vita* – all come together.

The text repeatedly thematizes the authorial intervention that allows this blurring of traveling, listening, and reading subjects, not least in the foregrounding of acts of narration throughout the text. Throughout the text journey recursively becomes narrative, even as narrative becomes part of journey – and thus of the developing narrative of the journey the next time it is told. When Willibald tells his story orally to the audience that includes Hygeburg on that specific Tuesday in June, it is but the last of numerous retellings, each of which becomes a catalyst for future action as well as a moment when the past and present coalesce.

Thus Willibald and his companions set off from Rome, bound ultimately for Jerusalem, traveling via Sicily and Ephesus, and making a side trip to Cyprus. Eventually reaching Syria, the land of the Saracens, evidently without the proper credentials, they are arrested as spies. Eventually they meet a Spaniard whose brother, the chamberlain of the Saracen king Murmummus (Emir-al-Mummenin), hears their story and arranges their freedom and permission to travel further.

While they are under arrest Willibald and his companions are the strangers, the foreigners in the scene, the objects of others' curiosity. In a scene reminiscent of that in which Saint Gregory is prompted to evangelize England by the sight of angelically handsome Northumbrian slave boys in the Roman market, they are allowed to wander the bazaar, where “illi cives urbium curiosi iugiter illic venire consueverant illos speculare, qui iuvenes et decori et vestium ornatu induti errant bene” (the citizens of the town, who are inquisitive people, used to come regularly to look at them, because they were young and handsome and clothed in beautiful garments).<sup>52</sup> Although not completely replicating the scene – Willibald and his companions are prisoners, not slaves, and they are in Damascus, not Rome – their experiences to some extent redeem the Saxon objects of that earlier public gaze as always already converted Christian subjects, an identity particularly relevant to members of the Bonifatian mission. The narrative “bail” that releases the pilgrims from prison occurs in a context that blurs their identification as both

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<sup>52</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 94; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 153. The story of the Northumbrian slaves is told in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Book 2, Chapter 1) as well as in its source, the anonymous Whitby Life of Saint Gregory. *Ecclesiastical History* (see note 27), 132–35; Charles W. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England: Together with first English Translations of The Oldest Life of Pope St. Gregory the Great by a Monk of Whitby and the Life of St. Guthlac of Crowland by Felix* (Hamdon, CT: Archon, 1968).



subject and object of gaze: as Willibald looks at – and having returned from his pilgrimage will describe as foreign – these others who in this moment look at him and his companions as others.

Later, having returned to Italy after his time in the Holy Land, Willibald joins the monastery of Saint Benedict at Monte Cassino. There he settles back into the stability and discipline of monastic life: “statimque ill magna mentis moderamine et dogmatum ingenio felicem fratrum conturuberniam sedulis disputationum admonitiis, non solum verbis, sed morum venustatis visitando docebat et recte constitutionis formam et coenobialis vitae normam in semet ipso ostendendo prebebat” (without delay he joined the community, for which he was so well fitted both by his great self-discipline and his natural aptitude for obedience).<sup>53</sup>

No reference is made to his narrating his travels at this point, although they must influence what comes next. He stays in this community for ten years, but is then called upon to accompany another traveler, a Spanish priest, to Rome. Pope Gregory III asks for his story:

Tunc ille agilis Christi vernaculus gloriosso gentium gubernatore sapiente sermonum industria humiliter edisserendo serie sui itineris ex ordine intimavit, quale modo multas migrando mundi istius meabit mansions, et quomodo almam altissimi etherium Plasmatoris natelem adventus sui locum in Bethlem adorando, opem postulando lustrandoque perambulabat et nihilominus aliam baptismatis eius terram in Iordane speculando seque balneando visitabat; sed et in Hierusalem sicque in Sancta Sion, ubi sacer seculorum Salvator in cruce susensus peremptus est atque sepultus et postea in Monte Oliveti in caelum ascendit.

[Then the servant of Christ humbly recounted to the glorious governor of the tribes all the details of his travels as they occurred. He told him how he had passed from place to place, how he had visited Bethlehem and prayed in the birthplace of his heavenly Creator, how he had seen where Christ was baptized in the river Jordan and had himself bathed there. He described his four visits to Jerusalem and Holy Sion, where Our Holy Savior had hung on the cross, was killed and buried and then ascended into heaven from Mount Olivet. All these things he told him and described.]<sup>54</sup>

As a result of this narration, the Pope sends Willibald to Germany to help Boniface. There he founds a community at Eichstätt, of which he will be consecrated Bishop, and is reunited with his brother Wynnebald. His final narration – the one on which Hygeburg bases her text – is the last (formal) recitation, perhaps, before his death and ultimate journey to Heaven.

If such recursiveness of narrative means that past and present are continually coalescing into a future, the core of Willibald's story, his travels in the Holy Land is itself marked by a queer overlapping and enfolding of time as it mixes present

<sup>53</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 102; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 160–61.

<sup>54</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 102–03; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 161.

and past tenses in its re-imagination of places, scenes, and adventures. The pilgrims travel in a narrative past, but the geographical sites they view are described in a textual present. Even what exactly constitutes the “present” is sometimes unclear: is it that of Willibald’s visit, that of Hygeburg’s writing, or that of the (future) reader’s reception of her text – and his past? The text incorporates multiple ways of measuring and marking time and duration. It is highly specific about Willibald’s narrating his story to Hygeburg on that June day.

The duration of mundane travel seems to require only simple linear tally – three days, for example – of the physical movement from place to place. Their arrival in different sacred locales, however, is often identified by the feast day on which it falls: they arrive in Jerusalem, for instance, on the feast of Saint Martin. Unsurprisingly, Easter recurs as a time marker, fixing their journey within liturgical time.

Beyond the calendar – both the *sanctorale* and the *temporale* – while in the Holy Land they inhabit, in part, a sacred *illud tempus*, a timeless (or perhaps untimely) eternal time. Narratively formulaic, the text identifies places visited as sites where such and such an event happened in the past of Scripture and where “now” a church stands in architectural commemoration, merging past and present. Thus the pilgrims come “in Galileam in illum locum, ubi Gabriel primum venit ad sancta Maria et dixit: Ave Maria et reliqua. Ibi est nunc aecclesia” (to Galilee, to the place where Gabriel first came to our Lady and said ‘Hail Mary’ (Luke 1.28). There is a church there now).<sup>55</sup> They visit Mount Thabor, “ubi Dominus transfiguratus est; ibi est nunc monasterium monachorum et aecclesia” (where our Lord was transfigured. At the moment there is a monastery of monks there).<sup>56</sup>

But which moment? That of the visit or that of the text? They visit Corazain, “ubi Dominus demoniacos curavit et diabolos mittebat in gregem porcorum; ibi fuit aecclesia christianorum” (where our Lord cured the man possessed of the devil and drove the demons into a herd of swine. A church stands there now).<sup>57</sup> Tiberias “stat in litore maris, ubi Dominus supra ambulat siccis pedibus, et Petrus super undas ambulans ad eum, demergatus est. Ibi sunt multe aecclesie et synagoga Iudeorum, sed et magna honor dominica” (stands at the edge of the sea on which our Lord walked dry-shod and where Peter sank when walking on the waters toward him. Many churches and synagogues of the Jews are built there).<sup>58</sup>

They also visit Cana, “ubi Dominus aquas in vino convertit, Illic est aecclesia magna, et in illa aecclesia stat in altare unum de 6 hydriis, quas Dominus iusserat implere aqua, et in vinum verse sunt; et de illo communicaverunt

<sup>55</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 95; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 153.

<sup>56</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 95; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 153.

<sup>57</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 96; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 154.

<sup>58</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 95; “Hodoeporicon” (see note 31), 154.

vinum" (where our Lord changed water into wine. A vast church stands there, and in the church one of the altars has on it one of the six water pots that our Lord ordered to be filled with water and then changed into wine; from it they drank some wine).<sup>59</sup> This paraliturgical practice allows, even fosters, cross-temporal participation in the biblical event.

Something similar occurs when they visit the site of the Lord's baptism:

Ibi est nunc aecclesia in columnis lapideis sursum elevate, et subtus aecclesia est nunc arida terra, ubi Dominus fuit baptizatus in ipso loco; et ubi nunc batizabt, ibi stat crux lignea in medio, et parva dirivatio aque stat illic, et unus funiculus extensus supra Iordanem, hinc et inde firmatus: tunc in sollempnitate epiphaniae infirmi et egroti venientes et habent se de funiculo et sic demergant in aquam, sed et mulieres que sunt steriles venient ibi. Episcopus noster Willibaldus balneavit se ibi in Iordanne.

[At this spot there is now a church built high up on columns of stone; beneath the church, however, the ground is dry. On the very place where Christ was baptized there stands a little wooden cross: a little stream of water is led off and a rope is stretched over the Jordan and tied at each end. Then on the feast of the Epiphany the sick and inform come there and, holding on to the rope, plunge themselves in the water. Barren women also come there. Our Bishop Willibald bathed himself there in the Jordan.]<sup>60</sup>

By doing so Willibald – who here seems to have already assumed his future role as Bishop – participates in the original Baptismal scene. Even outside liturgical and paraliturgical practice the actions of the pilgrims often recreate as they recall the events they have studied in Scripture and celebrated liturgically: when, for example, Willibald falls sick in Jerusalem he goes to the healing pool where Christ healed the paralytic in John 5:8 – and is himself healed.<sup>61</sup>

Temporal distance disappears even when a distinction is made between past and present, as when Willibald and Hygeburg note about Bethlehem that "illa locus ubi Christus natus est quondam fuit spelunca sub terra, et nunc est quadrangulus domus in petra excisum, et est terra circumquaque exfossa et inde projecta, et ibi supra nunc est aedificata aecclesia" (the place where our Lord was born was formerly a cave beneath the ground and is now a square chamber cut out of the rock; the earth has been dug away on all sides and thrown aside, and now the church has been built above it).<sup>62</sup>

Bethlehem and Jerusalem especially exist both in and out of time: ritualized movements at such sites often mediate between contemporary pilgrims and the

<sup>59</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 95; "Hodoeporicon" (see note 31), 153.

<sup>60</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 96; "Hodoeporicon" (see note 31), 154.

<sup>61</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 97; "Hodoeporicon" (see note 31), 155–56.

<sup>62</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 98; "Hodoeporicon" (see note 31), 156–57.

still resonant past of Scripture, making eternally present events in the Life of Christ and the history of salvation. Textual description, in turn, makes the far away close in (imagined) space as well as time. About the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, for example, we are told

Et ibi secus est ille horus, in quo erat sepulchram Salvatoris. Illa sepulchral fuerat in petra excise, et ille petra stat super terram et est quadrans in imo et in summon subtilis; et stat nunc in summitate illius sepulchri crux, et ibi supra nunc edificata est mirabilis domus, et in orientale plaga in illo petro sepulchri est ostia facta, per quam intrabunt homines in sepulchrum orare; et ibi est intus lectum, ubi corpus Domini iacebat; et ibi stant in lecto 15 crateras aureas cum oleo ardetes die noctuque.

[Nearby is the garden in which the tomb of our Savior was placed. This tomb was cut from the rock and the rock stands above ground: it is squared at the bottom and tapers toward a point at the top. On the highest point of it stands a cross, and a wonderful house has been constructed over it. At the eastern end a door has been cut in the rock of the sepulcher, through which people can enter into the tomb to pray. Inside there is the slab on which the body of our Lord lay, and on this slab fifteen lamps of gold burn day and night; it is situated on the north side of the interior of the tomb and lies at one's right hand as one enters the tomb to pray. In front of the door of the sepulcher lies a great square stone, a replica of that first stone that the angel rolled away from the mouth of the sepulcher.<sup>63</sup>]

Here, in this text as in other descriptions of Holy Land sites including Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*, such details allow readers unable to make the pilgrimage themselves to imagine places familiar from their reading of Scripture.

Through Hygeburg's writing, Willibald's experience, as remembered and shared orally, becomes the continuing property of the community. Her re-envisioning of his memories and testimony as text allows his recent past to overlap the more distant Scriptural past – and to coalesce with both the present of the written text and its future receptions. Within this queer temporality the *Hodoeporicon* becomes a vicarious voyage for his auditors and her readers. Hygeburg appropriates and imaginatively renders the individual journey as a communal one, a textual pilgrimage in its own right, uniting in its experience not only its narrators but also its readers. She does so, moreover, by incorporating elements of her own experience as well. Her narrative consequently engages with the possibilities of writing to construct textual bodies that can transcend time, space, and gendered corporeality.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> *Vitae* (see note 1), 97; "Hodoeporicon" (see note 31), 155.

<sup>64</sup> See also the contribution to this volume by Gavin Fort, who focuses, apart from other religious narratives, on Felix Fabri's *Sionspilger* (1492), a proxy pilgrimage account for the community of nuns back home in Germany.

Maha Baddar

# Texts that Travel: Translation Genres and Knowledge-Making in the Medieval Arabic Translation Movement

Some of the known stories about texts travelling in time and space include references to how the famous library of Alexandria acquired books by the legitimate means of purchase and the more questionable means of confiscating books from ships that sailed into Alexandria's famous port. The library also had a reputation of borrowing the famous Greek tragedies from libraries outside of Egypt without the intention of ever returning them. Hunayn Ibn Ishaq (809–873), the famous Abbasid head of translation circle, physician, and author, mentions in his autobiography that he as well as members of his circle used to travel to the different parts of the Abbasid Empire in search of a particular manuscript, either because it was needed as a primary source of knowledge or because there was a need to have more than one copy of a certain manuscript to compare for an accurate translation job. For instance, in his autobiography, Hunayn outlines his multiple trips in pursuit of a complete version of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*: "I sought for it earnestly and travelled in search for it in the lands of al-Iazira (Mesopotamia), Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, until I reached Alexandria, but I was not able to find anything except about half of it in Damascus."<sup>1</sup> To ensure that the translators met the demanding requirements of the sponsors, translation in Abbasid Baghdad was a lengthy and painstaking process that started with travel in order to make sure the translation circle had available all extant copies of the manuscript to be translated.

The trips that texts took through space and time during the medieval Arabic Translation Movement in the ninth and tenth centuries in Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Empire, will be the focus of this paper. These texts were read, translated, summarized, responded to, commented on, and importantly, used as the foundation for knowledge that was relevant to the inhabitants of the new places where these texts ended up at various periods.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Max Meyerhof, "New Light on Hunain Ibn Ishaq and His Period," *Isis* 8. 4 (1926): 685–724. This article includes the English translation.

2 Editor's note: Medieval and early modern Europe experienced a similar phenomenon, if we think of the large number of manuscripts exchanged between monasteries or of entire libraries that traveled with a princess when she married far away and wanted to be sure to have her own

Travel and mobility are at the heart of the meaning of the Arabic terms used to signify the transfer of texts from languages such as Greek, Persian, and Sanskrit into Arabic. These words include: *naqala*, *akhraja*, and *tarjama*. The latter is one of the most commonly used terms and means simply to *translate*. One of the meanings of *naqala* is to transport, in this case both to move text physically from one place to another as well as to deliver it from one language and culture to another. According to Remi Brague, “[a]mong the translators of Aristotle, [*naqala*] was the root word chosen to render ... movement according to place, or displacement.”<sup>3</sup> This includes above all the physical aspect of moving a manuscript from one place to another. Additionally, the translation and commentary constitute another level of displacement, an intellectual rather than a physical one. Brague also comments on the use of the term *akhraja*, which literally means “to bring out,”<sup>4</sup> and was used to refer to the different translation genres produced during the Translation Movement. He comments, “The connotations of these words are significative: ‘to transport’ implies the displacement of a contents [sic] that remains the same; ‘to bring out’ implies that only the translation brings the text out of its hole to introduce it into a public space.”<sup>5</sup> These connotations associated with the scholarship produced during the medieval Arabic Translation Movement are directly related to the travel that took place in order to make access to manuscripts possible and the knowledge contained within them available. As Remi Brague notes:

All of this is supposed to have happened as if knowledge were composed of movable objects that could be imported from one region to another just like goods in international trade. The transport of manuscripts is narrated as if it were a mission of exploration bringing back exotic curiosities.<sup>6</sup>

## Historical Background

The term Translation Movement refers to the translation work that took place in Baghdad during the Abbasid rule from the ninth to the tenth centuries C.E.

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cultural resources with her. See, for instance, Susan Groag Bell, “Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture,” *Signs* 74 (1982): 742–68. For the early modern age, see the contribution to this volume by Thomas Willard. The current paper only focuses on the phenomenon of traveling texts in the Arab world.

<sup>3</sup> Remi Brague, *The Legend of the Middle Ages: Philosophical Explorations of Medieval Christianity, Judaism, and Islam*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (2006; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 165.

<sup>4</sup> Brague, *The Legend* (see note 3), 165.

<sup>5</sup> Brague, *The Legend* (see note 3), 165.

<sup>6</sup> Brague, *The Legend* (see note 3), 165.

The Translation Movement of Baghdad is a significant event in the history of knowledge-making because of both the length of time that it spanned and the vast amount of knowledge it produced.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, the Translation Movement is shrouded in many myths and has not been fairly or adequately studied by medieval historians or philologists.<sup>8</sup> While the Translation Movement can be examined from many angles, in this paper I will focus on what happened to texts when they traveled from their country of origin (mainly Greece via Alexandria, Persia, and India) to Baghdad, where they were translated into Arabic. This will be accomplished by analyzing the motivation behind undertaking such a massive knowledge-making apparatus, as well as by analyzing the different translation genres because it is through these that we are able to understand the extent of appropriation that texts underwent in the process of traveling from one language to another and from one culture to another.

To accomplish this seemingly simple goal, I must first analyze the logistical issues that facilitated the travel of texts from the far corners of the then known earth to Baghdad in the ninth and tenth centuries. I must also introduce the reasons why the Arabs sponsored such a massive project that involved most sectors of society including the caliphal household, prominent government officials, professionals such as medical doctors, merchants, and finally the translators themselves.

While it is true that the intellectual environment of the Abbasid empire is considered one of the richest in human history, there is evidence that translation work did already take place earlier during the rule of the Umayyad empire (661–750 C.E.) in their capital of Damascus. The grand Translation Movement of Baghdad actually started during the Umayyad rule insofar as the multi-lingual nature of the expanding Islamic empire required it; translation was a daily practice because Arabic was not yet the official language of many of the newly acquired lands. Therefore, translation was necessary to perform the basic acts such as shopping in the market as well as more serious tasks such as translating the Bible to be able to engage dialectically with the Christian members of the population.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For an account of communication between different cultures in the larger Mediterranean region, see *Texts in Transit in the Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. Tzvi Y. Langermann and Robert G. Morrison (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> See Dimitri Gutas, “The Study of Arabic Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: An Essay on the Historiography of Arabic Philosophy,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29.1 (2002): 5–25.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Roggema, “The Debate between Patriarch John and an Emir of the Mhaggraye: A Reconsideration of the Earliest Christian-Muslim Debate,” *Christians and Muslims in Dialogue in the Islamic Orient of the Middle Ages*, ed. Martin Tamcke (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2007), 21–39; here 23–24.

According to Dimitri Gutas, during the Umayyad period, Greek-speaking functionaries and the Greek language continued to be used in the Umayyad imperial administration: the practical needs for translation included the translation of the administrative apparatus from Greek into Arabic; Aristotle's correspondence with Alexander was translated into Arabic for the Umayyad Caliph Hisham for military and administrative purposes; and in Egypt and Syro-Palestine, translation took place on a daily basis for commercial and social purposes as illustrated by the bilingual Greek and Arabic papyri of deeds and contracts.<sup>10</sup> We also learn from the tenth-century historian Mohamed Ibn Ishaq Ibn an-Nadim in his famous history, *al-Fihrist*, that the Umayyad Caliph Khaled Ibn Yazeed Ibn Mu'awayya commissioned Greek philosophers who lived in Egypt to translate philosophical works from Greek and Coptic into Arabic.<sup>11</sup>

As part of the larger mission of fulfilling immediate practical needs, oral translation was widely practiced in the Umayyad Empire. According to Franz Rosenthal, the tenth-century historian Hamza al-Isfahani related that "when he needed information of Graeco-Roman history, he asked an old Greek, who had been captured and served as a valet, to translate for him a Greek historical work orally. This was accomplished with the help of the Greek's son, Yumn, who knew Arabic well."<sup>12</sup> Clearly then, translation was a common practice in different parts of the Umayyad Empire. These humble beginnings set the scene for the major translation work that took place later during the rule of the Abbasids in Baghdad.

## Part 1: Why Translate?

Demand for knowledge, whether for practical or ideological purposes, was the main drive behind the translation work that took place in medieval Baghdad. Sponsors paid top dinar to translators who worked within organizations known as translation circles. At the heart of this process of knowledge production were those sponsors who constituted the direct audience for the translated works. The scholarship produced in these translation circles constituted what is referred to as the first (Arabic) Renaissance. When the needs of these sponsors were not met by direct translations of older works, newer, more advanced knowledge was

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<sup>10</sup> Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th Centuries)* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 23.

<sup>11</sup> Mohamed Ibn Ishaq Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist*, ed. Nahid Uthman (Doha: Dar Qatary Ibn al-Foujja, 2004), 50.

<sup>12</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 23.



produced, as the sections on medicine and astronomy below will demonstrate. As a result, a complex process of knowledge-making took place that included constant evaluation, synthesis, and the authoring of original research.

## Why Translate? Professional Development and the Translation of Medicine

The knowledge acquired through the translation of the medical treatises of Hippocrates and Galen was directly connected to financial stability and good social standing in the caliphal court. Physicians needed medical knowledge to keep their prestigious jobs and the socio-economic status that came with them. Many of the physicians in Baghdad who sponsored translations of medical texts were Nestorian Christians who practiced medicine in Jundisapur, Persia, and were commissioned by the Abbasid caliphs to practice medicine at their courts. For example, the Bukhtishu were a Nestorian Christian family who immigrated from Jundisapur and, over the course of seven generations, earned considerable wealth by being the caliphs' physicians.<sup>13</sup> The following account from Ibn Sa'id al-Andalusi's history introduces a few members of this family who were not only physicians but also authors of original medical texts and sponsors of translated medical works:

Among the Christians, there was Bukhtishu' and his son Jibril Ibn Bukhtishu': they were two noble physicians. Bukhtishu' served and treated Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah and those in his court. After him, he passed his services to Abu Ja'far al-Mansur. After his death, his son took over and served the kings of Banu Abbas. Bukhtishu' was the author of many well-known medical treatises.<sup>14</sup>

In order to be able to remain the caliphal physicians for many generations, the Bukhtishu' family was one of the most generous sponsors of translation in the medical field. According to Gutas, these sponsors "had a stake in maintaining their scientific superiority because their high social status and caliphal positions and the consequent wealth they amassed depended on their medical expertise.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (see note 11), 591. Ibn Abi Usaybia', *Uyun al-Anba fi Tabaaqat al-Atibaa*, ed. Amir an-Najjar. 6 vols. (Cairo: Al-Hay'a al-Masreya al-Ama, 2004), vol. 1, 55.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Sa'id al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World: Book of the Categories of Nations*, ed. and trans. Sema'an I. Salem and Alok Kumar. History of Science Series, 5 (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991), 32–33.

Their paramount concern was the need for expert medical knowledge.”<sup>15</sup> These sponsored translations included the works of Hippocrates, Galen, and Theonnestos.

Aside from supporting physicians to maintain their socio-economic status, translation helped them to solve professional problems related to access to certain medical knowledge. For example, the inaccessibility of information about how to carry out a dissection was one such problem. Yuhanna Ibn Massaweyah, physician for al-Ma'mun, al-Mu'tassim, al-Wathiq, and al-Mutawakkil,<sup>16</sup> commissioned the translations of Galen's anatomical books from Hunayn as the next best alternative to this gap in knowledge about dissection. The data gained from these sources replaced the first-hand knowledge that could have been acquired had dissection been legal at the time. Hunayn translated two of these books, namely, *On the Anatomy of Veins and Arteries* and *On the Anatomy of Nerves* to serve the research needs of Ibn Massaweyah.<sup>17</sup>

The translation of Hippocratic and Galenic texts also served an educational need. This could explain the interest of Arab government officials in sponsoring translation in the medical field: these works were necessary for the success of their educational initiatives by providing the backbone for a medical curriculum. The medical school in Baghdad was built after the model of its predecessor at Alexandria where Hippocratic and Galenic works were the basis for a medical career. According to Hunayn's firsthand account:

These [books 1–20 of the list he provides in the *Risala*] are the books to the reading of which the students of the Medical School at Alexandria were confined [sic]. They used to read them in the order which I have followed in my list. They were accustomed to meet every day for the reading and interpretation of one of the standard works, in the same way in which, in our day, our Christian friends are accustomed to meet every day at the educational institution ... for the study of a standard work from among the books of the ancients. Concerning the remainder of [Galen's] books they were accustomed to read them everyone for himself, after an introductory study of the aforementioned books; just as our friends read today the explanations of the books of the ancients.<sup>18</sup>

This account by Hunayn sheds light on the medical and the translation professions at that time: translators were themselves medical doctors and students of medicine who were involved, perhaps in collaboration with government officials,

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<sup>15</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 118.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (see note 11), 589–90.

<sup>17</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 119.

<sup>18</sup> Meyerhof, “New Light” (see note 1), 702. The first sentence in this quote is awkwardly written but the gist of it is that students at the medical school at Alexandria read these books by Galen as part of their curriculum.

in the creation of an educational establishment that was based on imported knowledge that would ultimately exceed the findings of that knowledge through practical research.

Acquiring knowledge in the medical field did not stop at translating the works of the ancients. The new knowledge that was produced took different forms, such as commentaries and explanations of canonical texts. For example, Qusta Ibn Luqa al-Ba'lbaki, a physician who, in addition to translating medical texts, also provided *tafsir*, and *sharh* (interpretation and explanation, respectively) of thirty-four books.<sup>19</sup> Ibn an-Nadim credits Hunayn with authoring thirty books as a physician,<sup>20</sup> and Meyerhof mentions one hundred works by Hunayn.<sup>21</sup> About this latter point, Ibn Sa'id al-Andalusi states: "It is this Hunayn who translated and clarified the works of Hippocrates and Galen and condensed them in the best possible way."<sup>22</sup> The smaller number of books attributed to Hunayn by Ibn an-Nadim could be in reference to the books he exclusively authored whereas the larger number Hunayn himself mentions could be a combination of his translations, commentaries, and original works.

The fact that these translators appropriated the original works, summarizing them at times, and clarifying them at other times, shows that they were more than just people who transferred a text from a source language into a target language. In fact, some of the translators in Hunayn's circle studied medicine in Alexandria and as a result became translators as well as practitioners of medicine. Hunayn mentions in his *Risala* that "Sergios had translated [*De Causis et Symptombai-tus*] into Syriac twice, once before he studied at the Alexandrian School and once after that."<sup>23</sup> This not only explains the liberties that were taken with some of the original texts but also raises the question about translation genres, which will be covered in a later section.

It is important also to note that Arab physicians openly questioned the translated knowledge in the field of medicine as the titles of some of the extant works illustrate. Abu Bakr al-Razi's unpublished works, *al-Shukuk 'ala Jalinus* (*Doubts Over Galen*) and Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi's *al-'Ifdah wa-l-I'tibar*,<sup>24</sup> illustrate the critical approach that the field of medicine adopted toward translated

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<sup>19</sup> Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (see note 11), 587–89.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (see note 11), 586.

<sup>21</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 706–07.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World* (see note 14), 33.

<sup>23</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 691–92.

<sup>24</sup> George Saliba, *A History of Arabic Astronomy: Planetary Theories During the Golden Age of Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 64. In the latter reference al-Baghdadi declares that his own observations are more reliable than those of Galen.

knowledge. Research in medicine reached its peak through the publication of Ibn Sina's *Canon of Medicine* (1025) that was taught in European universities until early modern times.

Sponsors of medical translations had mixed backgrounds and different goals. Hunayn's *Risala* names more than twenty men upon whose request the Galenic works were translated. They can be divided into two categories: the first group was made up of prominent statesmen who were learned men, nearly all of them Muslim; the second group was made up of men whom Hunayn describes as teachers, colleagues, and friends of the translators, nearly all of whom were Nestorian physicians of Jundisapur or Baghdad. The translations made for the former group were in Arabic, while the translations made for the latter were in Syriac, the first language of this group of sponsors.<sup>25</sup> The sponsors belonging to the former group, according to Hunayn, included Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Malik az-Zayat, vizer of Caliph al-Mu'tassim; Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Musa al-Khatib, known as "the secretary;" Abu Musa Ibn Isa al-Khatib who held at least seven administrative posts; Ishaq Ibn Ibrahim at-Tahiri, general and commander of the Baghdad police; Abdallah Ibn Ishaq, judge of the western part of Baghdad; and Ishaq Ibn Sulayman, governor of Egypt in the time of Harun al-Rashid.<sup>26</sup>

Some of the names of members of the latter group included Yuhanna Ibn Massawayah, a Jundisapur physician who had moved to Baghdad to be at the service of Harun al-Rashid, Jibril Ibn Bukhtishu', the most prominent member of the Nestorian family of physicians, Bukhtishu Ibn Jibril, Salmasawaih Ibn Bunan; Shirishu Ibn Qurtu, another medical practitioner from Jundisapur, Zakariyya Ibn Abdallah at-Tayfour and his son Israil, Dawud al-Mutabbib, and Ali al-Fayum.<sup>27</sup>

It is easy to conclude why the latter group commissioned these translations: they were physicians and medical professors who needed this material for professional and academic reasons as well as to maintain the wealth and power that came with the prominent socio-economic status they acquired as this section has demonstrated. The goals of the statesmen who commissioned translations of medical and philosophical works are less obvious, however. The primary historical accounts stop at informing us of the details and motives behind the generous funding and diligence of statesmen in pursuing original manuscripts and translations. Brague offers an explanation that could be applicable to the case of this particular group: "A class of merchants and functionaries developed who had leisure, an indispensable condition of high culture,"<sup>28</sup> sponsoring translation

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<sup>25</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 713.

<sup>26</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 714–16.

<sup>27</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 717–20.

<sup>28</sup> Brague, *The Legend* (see note 3), 161.

work and acquiring cultural artifacts was a sign of belonging to the educated class. It could also mean that Arab civil servants refused to give up competition in any field for foreigners to monopolize freely.

To conclude this section, the fact that many of the translators themselves were students and practitioners of medicine illustrates the practical nature of the Translation Movement. Moreover, the ambiguity of the different genres associated with translation work in the field and the fact that many of the translators authored their own books is a fine example of the dialogic nature of knowledge making in Abbasid Baghdad and challenges the myth that the Arabs just translated and preserved Greek knowledge without making any contributions themselves.

## Why Translate? Avoiding Religious Conflict and the Translation of Philosophy

Arabic thinkers had access through translation philosophical works that included pre-Socratic, Greek, and Alexandrian/neo-Platonic thinking: the works of Thales, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Porphyry were available to thinkers in medieval Baghdad.<sup>29</sup> Some scholars embraced the knowledge provided by the translated works, such as al-Mu'tazilah who were influenced by neo-Platonic thinking, and the Brethren of Purity who adhered to Pythagorean thinking. Others expressed disagreement with certain views, such as ar-Razi who expressed strong resentment for Aristotle and adhered to Platonic thinking instead. At the same time, theologians completely rejected the adoption of any kind of philosophical thinking as heretical and preferred a strict adherence to Islamic teaching. This made the translation of Greek and Neo-Platonic philosophical works a project in persuasion by the scholars such as al-Kindi who viewed philosophy as “handmaid of religion.”<sup>30</sup>

A definition of philosophy as pursued by medieval Arab thinkers might be helpful in shedding light on the role of philosophy in the medieval Islamic world. According to al-Kindi in *On First Philosophy*, “[philosophy] is the knowledge of the reality of things, according to the measure of human capacity”; first, philosophy is the highest part of [knowledge] and is defined as “the knowledge of the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (see note 11), 507–11.

<sup>30</sup> Majid Fakhry, *A Short Introduction to Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997), 23.

First, True One, who is the cause of every truth.”<sup>31</sup> Similarly, al-Farabi, in the *Book of Letters*, compares the human pursuit of philosophy with the “natural yearning of the soul to know the causes of sensible matters on earth, in it or around it, together with what is observed or appears of the heavens.”<sup>32</sup> It is clear from these definitions that philosophy was directly related to religion, and would be used by thinkers involved in a society that had a fair share of inter-and intrareligious disagreements. Moreover, the fact that during classical and medieval times, philosophy was a vast field of knowledge that included sub-fields such as logic, metaphysics, ethics, and politics, the translation of such works was considered helpful in containing possible disagreements among the diverse members of the expanding empire, hence its commission by the Abbasid caliphate.

Although most literature focuses on the use of philosophical knowledge, especially logic, in debates that took place between Muslims and Christians due to the cosmopolitan nature of the Islamic empire, philosophy was primarily used as a tool for resolving theological controversies within the Islamic faith itself. Sponsors of these translated works varied from members of intellectual movements who challenged the absolute power that the caliphs granted themselves, to the caliphs themselves who needed this knowledge to contain rebellion and hold a firmer grip on the population.

The Abbasid caliphate recognized the need to resort to Greek philosophical thinking to resolve a theological problem within the Islamic Empire, namely Manichaeism. Here is the account of historian al-Ahbari (who is cited by historian al-Masu'di in *Muruj ad-Dahab*) about this ideological challenge and how the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi handled it through translated scholarship about argumentation:

Al-Mahdi devoted all his efforts to exterminating heretics and apostates ... [He] was the first caliph to command the theologians who used dialectic disputation (al-jadaliyyin) in their research to compose books against the heretics ... The theologians then produced demonstrative proofs against the disputers (mu'anidin), eliminated the problems posed by the heretics, and expounded the truth in clear terms to the doubters.<sup>33</sup>

The translation of philosophical works sponsored by the caliphate also played a role in providing the theoretical basis for the debates that took place between Muslims and people who held different belief systems, mostly Christians. The new Islamic empire was also inhabited by different Christian groups who were

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<sup>31</sup> Fakhry, *A Short Introduction* (see note 30), 22.

<sup>32</sup> Majid Fakhry, *Al-Farabi, Founder of Islamic Neoplatonism: His Life, Works and Influence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002), 13.

<sup>33</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 65.

well versed in the art of argumentation amongst themselves. This diverse religious environment led to debates between Christians and Muslims in which the participants relied on rules for persuasion borrowed from the different branches of logic. One work whose availability in an Arabic translation aided the Muslims in engaging in debates with Christians is Aristotle's *Topics*. In 782 C.E., Timothy I (728–823), a Nestorian patriarch, translated Aristotle's *Topics* into Arabic at the request of al-Mahdi.<sup>34</sup> In this context, *Topics* was considered a good resource for learning about the art of argumentation for the sake of the debates that were sure to ensue. The letters of Timothy I are an example of the nature of these debates.<sup>35</sup> After al-Mahdi learned about the rules of argumentation from the *Topics*, his first debate was with the book's very translator, Timothy I, who refers to the debate in Letter LIX.<sup>36</sup> The significance of *Topics* is also reflected in the number of translations it underwent. After the translation sponsored by al-Mahdi had appeared, it was translated once again a century later straight from Greek by Abu-'Uthman ad-Dimashqi. Fifty years later, it was translated one more time by Yahya Ibn 'Adi from Ishaq's Syriac translation.<sup>37</sup>

The knowledge gained through the translation of Greek and neo-Platonic philosophical works was not just used to emphasize disagreement in religious disputations. It was also used, mostly by Christian thinkers, as a common ground to highlight similarities between religions that helped make their life in a predominantly Muslim society easier. Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, the renowned translator and head of a main translation circle, covered this issue in his *Adab al-Falasifah*. In reference to Hunayn's book, Sidney H. Griffith explains:

[The] presentation of Christianity and Islam and their institutions in philosophical dress, so striking in Hunayn's *Adab al-Falasifah*, seems to have been a bid on the part of the Christian intellectual elite in Abbasid Baghdad to find a shared moral discourse between Christians and Muslims which would leave their mutually incompatible, religious differences safely enshrined within a commonly accepted ethical framework which could then allow them to discuss these same doctrinal differences in philosophical terms which would have the potential to convey clarity of thought if not a shared religious confession.<sup>38</sup>

It is important to note that Christian and Jewish professionals and thinkers held high positions in Abbasid society and, as Hunayn's book illustrates, the availability

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34 Sidney H. Griffith, "From Patriarch Timothy I to Hunayn Ibn Ishaq: Philosophy and Christian Apology in Abbasid Times; Reason, Ethics and Public Policy," *Christians and Muslims in Dialogue* (see note 9), 77.

35 Griffith, "From Patriarch Timothy" (see note 34), 75.

36 Griffith, "From Patriarch Timothy" (see note 34), 77.

37 Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 61.

38 Griffith, "From Patriarch Timothy" (see note 34), 92.

of philosophical knowledge as a common ideological framework played an important role in these groups' assimilation into a predominantly Islamic society.

The sponsorship of the translation of Greek and Alexandrian neo-Platonic philosophical works by Arab thinkers had serious social and political implications in the Abbasid society. According to these schools of thinking, one experienced happiness through acquiring knowledge that is gained through leading a virtuous life. In other words, leading a virtuous life purifies the soul and makes it receptive to (divine) knowledge. The highest degree of knowledge was to understand the causes of things, which is the realm of metaphysics, and an ideal state politically and socially was one in which existence relied on the ethics learned from this philosophical heritage. These works inspired the composition of original works by Arab thinkers of the time; these works were meant to improve the socio-political composition of the Abbasid empire. Such works include Hunayn's aforementioned *Adab al-Falasifah*, and Yahya Ibn 'Adi's *Reformation of Morals*,<sup>39</sup> but the most famous of these works were al-Farabi's *Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Divine City* and *On Civil Polity*. Additionally, Ibn Sina's encyclopedic work, *al-Shifa*, includes many references to the political make up of an ideal city that are based on Plato's and al-Farabi's work. It could be argued that such treatises were sponsored by the caliphate for purposes of ethical and political improvement of the state, but this is highly unlikely. Most probably they were composed by these thinkers as a critique of the Abbasid corruption and to offer an alternative where Greek models were combined with Islamic thinking to produce an ideal state, governed by a prophet-philosopher as al-Farabi's above mentioned books advocate.

## Why Translate? Maintaining Power Over a Growing Population and the Translation of Astrology

In addition to the practical uses of the translated astronomical works (as Part 2 will show), translation in the field had ideological goals to fulfill. These goals were achieved through the translation of astrological texts, mainly from Persian, to suppress any possible revolt by the Persian members of the Islamic Empire.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Griffith, "From Patriarch Timothy" (see note 34), 92.

<sup>40</sup> See Saliba, *A History*, 66 (see note 24). To distinguish between astronomy and astrology we must first understand that both fields were studied under '*ilm al-nujum*' (the science of the stars). According to George Saliba, "The expression '*ilm al-nujum*' (science of the stars), as used by most Muslim authors, referred to both astrology and astronomy. More precisely, astrology – defined by the ninth-century astrologer Abu Ma'shar as 'the knowledge of the effects of the power of



During al-Mansur's reign, the translation of the *Denkard*, the official text of the Zoroastrian religion, helped the early Abbasid caliphs to legitimize their rule over the Persian members of their empire and contain potential opposition through an understanding of this group's cultural heritage. Gutas describes the adoption of Zoroastrian ideology as "a pragmatic and sensible move on the part of al-Mansur who realized that while it was possible to eliminate opposition, it was impossible to eradicate entire cultural backgrounds."<sup>41</sup>

Another example of the role of translation of astrological texts in establishing and maintaining ideologies is the date of the building of Baghdad and the choice of its circular shape. The decisions involved in the process had astrological significance and direct ties to the Translation Movement. For example, the circular shape of Baghdad was indicative of a distinctive imperial ideology. Literally, it meant that the caliph was at equal distance from all sections of his capital.<sup>42</sup> The availability of translated knowledge from different centers of learning aided in guaranteeing maximum power for those who had access to this knowledge. In addition to taking the advice of Persian astrologers concerning the date of building the city, and possibly its shape, the planning of the city was also based on the application of Euclid's definition of a circle in his *Elements*.<sup>43</sup> Here, al-Mansur's consultants combined the theoretical knowledge from Euclid with the ideology of the Persian *Denkard* to achieve maximum power.

As time progressed, so did the needs of the Abbasid caliphate and the way they manipulated the knowledge at their disposal. Al-Mansur's grandson, al-Ma'mun, modified his predecessor's approach to the Zoroastrian imperial ideology of centralized government substituting Islam for Zoroastrian ideology, hence establishing a connection between religion and politics that would serve as the beginning of one of the major intellectual debates in Abbasid Baghdad.<sup>44</sup> During al-Ma'mun's time, the imposition of one school of Islamic thought served his purpose of maintaining control over the Empire. Moreover, silencing opposing schools that threatened his power was more relevant to his time than promoting a Zoroastrian astronomical ideology since the Persian population had been

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the stars, at a given time, as well as the future time' – was referred to as '*ilm ahkam al-nujum* (science of the decrees of the stars). ... Astronomy, on the other hand, was commonly referred to as '*ilm al-falak* (science of the spheres), or more commonly '*ilm al-hay'a* (science of the [heavenly] configurations)." See also al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World* (see note 14), who describes astronomy as "verifiable and scientific" and astrology as "natural astronomy ... which is the knowledge of the effect of the planets on the world of generation and corruption" (55).

<sup>41</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 50.

<sup>42</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 51–52.

<sup>43</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 52.

<sup>44</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 80–81.

converted to Islam for several generations at this time. This strategic shift from one state-sponsored ideology (Persian astrology) to another (Islamic theology) illustrates the critical approach the Abbasids adopted toward translation: they adhered to the ideas in translated learning when it served their purposes and substituted it with local, Islamic knowledge when the latter better suited their needs.

## Part 2: Translation and Knowledge-Making

### Translation and Knowledge-Making: Hybridity and Innovation in the Case of Astronomy

The focus of the previous section was to explore why translation work took place at such a large scale in medieval Baghdad. Despite colonial attitudes that credit the Translation Movement with simply preserving knowledge, there is abundant evidence that, in the process of translation, more happened than just the faithful conveyance of a text from a source language to a target language.<sup>45</sup> Innovative research was sponsored alongside translation work. The former produced more accurate knowledge through scientific inquiry. In this section I will use examples from the research and experimentation conducted in the field of astronomy by medieval Arabic astronomers to highlight the process of knowledge-making that went hand-in-hand with the translation.

The translation of astronomical treatises inspired extensive original work on astronomy that took place in medieval Baghdad. This scholarship included synthesizing knowledge acquired through translation works that came from different parts of the Islamic Empire such as Egypt, India, and Persia, as well as

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<sup>45</sup> Gutas, “The Study of Arabic” (see note 8). The Translation Movement is shrouded in what Dimitri Gutas calls Orientalist myths that minimize the role of the Arabs in advancing human knowledge during a period that had no less impact on society than the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods in the West. The myth with the greatest long-term impact is the misconception that medieval Arabs merely did humanity the favor of preserving Greek heritage that would have otherwise been lost under the anti-Hellenic medieval Christian church. These colonial attitudes undermined Arabic learning to justify their military presence under the guise of civilizing the Arab natives. This attitude started as early as the Crusades to justify their occupation of Arab-Muslim lands. Later European occupation also undermined the value of Arabic learning to justify their colonial agendas (for example, the authors of the multi-volume series, *Description de l’Egypte*, clearly articulate their civilizing mission to justify their occupation of Egypt to a European audience). See *Description de l’Egypte: Publiee par les Ordres de Napoleon Bonaparte* (London: Taschen, 2007)

independent research conducted by Arabic scholars when they were not satisfied with the findings available in the translated works. The access to astronomical works from different cultures led to synthesizing this knowledge and contributed to creating new and better theory and practice in the field.

The translation of astronomical works fulfilled practical needs for the Abbasid society such as understanding the movements of the planets and calculating prayer times. For example, according to Ibn Sa'id's account of the translation of Ptolemy's *Almagest*:

Al-Ma'mun charged the scientists of his time with the construction of the equipment mentioned by Ptolemy in *Almagest* and with its use in the study of the planets and their motions. Al-Ma'mun's orders were carried out and observations began in the city of Shamasiyah in the region of Damascus, al-Sham, in the year A.H. 214 [A.D. 833]. They determined the length of the solar year, the magnitude of the sun's declination, the eccentricity of its orbits, and the position of its apogee. They further studied the behavior of stars and planets.<sup>46</sup>

However, the Arabs' work on astronomy did not only rely on isolated translated works. Scholars synthesized the knowledge acquired through the translation of works that came from the different regions of the Islamic empire. One significant astronomical work that contributed to this hybrid knowledge was the *Sindhind* that was translated into Arabic from Sanskrit. Arabic astronomers combined the knowledge acquired from this book with astronomical knowledge that was acquired from other parts of the Abbasid Empire such as Persia and Egypt to arrive at more advanced knowledge. Ibn Sa'id's account offers a good idea of this complicated process,

In [*Sindhind*] calculations of star positions were carried out to an accuracy of one minute. Al-Mansur ordered that the book be translated into Arabic so that it could be used by Arab astronomers as the foundation for understanding celestial motions. Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim al-Farazi translated it. This book was used by astronomers until the time of al-Ma'mun, when it was abbreviated for him by Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, who extracted from it his famous tables, which were commonly used in the Islamic world. In addition, al-Khwarizmi made some changes in the *Sindhind* system and deviated from its relations and declinations; he adopted the Persian system in formulating his equations and relied on the method of Ptolemy for determining the declination of the sun.<sup>47</sup>

Al-Khwarizmi combined Indian, Persian, and Greek-Alexandrian scholarship to create new knowledge illustrating the critical approach Arabic scholars had toward translated material.

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<sup>46</sup> Al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World* (see note 14), 47.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World* (see note 14), 46–47.

To further illustrate the complexity of the knowledge-making process based on translation, not all Arab scholars agreed with the information they received through translation. Al-Baghdadi is a scholar who disagreed with the claims of the aforementioned *Sindhind*. Ibn Sa'id emphasizes the creative streak in Arabic scholarship through his account of al-Baghdadi's research:

Among those who were known for their contribution to the science dealing with the motions of the stars and the form of the universe, we have ... Ahmad Ibn Abd Allah al-Baghdadi, known as Habash. He lived during the reign of al-Ma'mun and al-Mu'tasim and has three tables of astronomy, the first of which was prepared in accordance with the *Sindhind* system, in which he generally differed from the work of al-Farazi and al-Khuwarizmi on most operations, because he adopted the use of the movements of the zodiac from the methods presented by Theon of Alexandria. This enabled him to determine the longitudinal positions of the planets. He prepared this table early in his career, when he still believed in the methods of the *Sindhind*. His second table, known as al-Mumtahan [the Tested], is his most famous. He prepared it after his return to the practice of observational astronomy and included in it the motions of the planets as they were established by tests performed in his time. The third is the smallest of the three tables and is known by the name al-Shah [the King].<sup>48</sup>

The texts that refer to the synthesizing attempts in the field of astronomy by Arabic scholars are known as *hay'a* texts. According to George Saliba, the term "has no equivalent in the Greek tradition and is difficult to translate. It can be described as a conceptually organizing term that refers to the type of astronomical texts in which the form (i.e., *hay'a* = form, configuration, etc.) and the behavior of the celestial spheres were discussed."<sup>49</sup> These texts have their origin in the ninth century and they attempted to synthesize the traditions of *Almagest* and *Planetary Hypotheses* which posed many problems to astronomers. This, in turn, gave rise to another Arabic tradition by the eleventh century, that of 'Shukuk' or 'Istidrak' (doubts); these texts "written for the purpose of reforming Ptolemaic astronomy by offering new mathematical models that were consistent from both the mathematical and the physical points of view, usually went a step beyond the doubts expressed against Ptolemy. They offered new alternatives, and were all clearly perceived as belonging to the continually developing *hay'a* tradition where such alternatives were the main concern."<sup>50</sup> Ibn al-Haytham's *al-Shukuk 'ala Batlaymus* represented "the climax of that critical tradition."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World* (see note 14), 51.

<sup>49</sup> Saliba, *A History* (see note 24), 5.

<sup>50</sup> Saliba, *A History* (see note 24), 6.

<sup>51</sup> Saliba, *A History* (see note 24), 19.

By the thirteenth century, Arab astronomers such as Muy'ayyad al-Din al-Urdi and Yahya ibn Shukr al-Maghribi had completely abandoned Ptolemy's methods as well as the *fusul* method, developed by Arab astronomers who were making up for Ptolemy's shortcomings, inventing more reliable techniques.<sup>52</sup>

This section on astronomy highlights several characteristics of the learning production process within the Translation Movement. First, scholars translated works that they needed for immediate practical needs. Second, because of the size of the Empire, scholars had at their disposal different theories regarding the same field that they synthesized to arrive at more advanced learning. Lastly, scholars conducted their own research and reached conclusions that sometimes contradicted the initial findings acquired through translation.

## Translation and Knowledge Making: Translation Genres

As the previous sections of this paper have shown so far, faithfully reflecting the content of an original source text in a target language is not the only activity that happened in the medieval Arabic translation circles. Therefore, the study of translation genres associated with the Translation Movement is necessary to clarify any ambiguity associated with the term 'translation.' In reality, summarizing, explaining, commenting, adapting, synthesizing, and introducing changes to original works were all referred to as translation, which makes the discussion of translation genres an integral part of the study of the Translation Movement. The modern scholarly literature is filled with errors which undermine the degree of innovation present within works associated with the Translation Movement. For example, the editor of al-Farabi's Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric claims that the work is a summary of the first book of the Rhetoric,<sup>53</sup> denying all the innovative contributions of al-Farabi that influenced the entire Arabic commentary tradition that followed his work.

Scholars who comment on the translation genres sometimes inadvertently fall into the trap of making claims that impose limitations on these genres. Remi Brague, for example, limits the translation genres to what he calls inclusion and

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<sup>52</sup> Saliba, *A History* (see note 24), 10.

<sup>53</sup> Abu Nasr al-Farabi, *Kitab fi al-Mantiq: Al-Khataba*, ed. Mohamed M. Salim (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub, 1976).

digestion,<sup>54</sup> two terms that do not cover the scope and the flexibility of the work that was produced in the medieval Baghdad translation circles. The following is his description of his theory of translation genres:

A commentary can reproduce the lemmas of the text to be explicated, or it can present the text as an integral whole by paraphrasing it. In the first case, the letter of the source is maintained, surrounded by elements that enhance it; in the second, the source loses its independence and the difference between the commented text and the commenting text is erased. I see in these two styles of commentary particular instances of two more general models of appropriation of a cultural heritage. I propose to call them “inclusion” and “digestion.”<sup>55</sup>

He defines his terms as follows:

Thus I shall take the word ‘inclusion’ in a technical sense, to indicate an appropriation in which what is appropriated is maintained in its alterity and surrounded by the process of appropriation itself, a process whose very presence reinforces the alterity of what has been appropriated. In contrast, I shall call ‘digestion’ the process of appropriation in which the object is so profoundly internalized that it loses its independence. In this case, the appropriation does away with all the difference between the subject that does the appropriating and the object appropriated.<sup>56</sup>

He adds:

each of the two methods of appropriation ... finds its equivalent in a literary genre. The first is *commentary*. In it the classical text is reproduced in its entirety, broken down into units of meaning called ‘lemmas,’ after which each lemma is studied and explicated. The second method is to rewrite the text so that it comes to be integrated into a new work, thus losing its independence. This is the method of the *paraphrase*.<sup>57</sup>

It is not clear from the previous quotes whether Bague means that paraphrase is a genre of commentary or that they are two separate genres. In response to Bague’s claim in the latter quote, I would assert that there is no commentary work where the original text was included in its entirety and then framed by the Arabic scholar’s explication and commentary. Bague himself provides no examples of such cases. Bague’s claims are not completely false, but a close reading of the work of al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina allows us to reframe Bague’s claims as follows: commentary as a genre used by medieval Arabic scholars is a case of digestion,

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<sup>54</sup> Bague, *The Legend* (see note 3), 148–49. Bague refers to commentary as a method of inclusion and paraphrase as one of digestion.

<sup>55</sup> Bague, *The Legend* (see note 3), 51.

<sup>56</sup> Bague, *The Legend* (see note 3), 146.

<sup>57</sup> Bague, *The Legend* (see note 3), 148.

not inclusion. However, overall, Brague's terms are too restrictive in attempting to impose recent, Western genres of scholarship on the wide range of commentary produced during the Translation Movement. A more flexible account than Brague's comes from a lecture by Santala in which he states that most translators provided explanations as part of their translation as well as edited, criticized, and added ideas and meanings to the original.<sup>58</sup> Brague's classification of translation genres into inclusion and digestion does not accommodate all these types of analysis and invention that often occurred within the same work.

Overall, the descriptions provided by medieval historians more accurately reflect the complexity and diversity of these translation genres. For the medieval historians, the term *translation* was an umbrella term that included other genres such as the summary and the commentary (which themselves included subgenres). While providing a list of translators in history, medieval historian Ibn an-Nadim uses the term *explain* several times despite the fact that his main topic is translation.<sup>59</sup> Ibn an-Nadim provides specific examples of these translation genres. He mentions that *Categories* was *translated* by Hunayn and that Porphyry, Stephan of Alexandria, Ammonious, al-Farabi, and that Abu Bishr Matta *explained* it. He also mentions *summaries* of this book which include two subgenres in the Arabic tradition: *mukhtasraat* and *jawami'* (both terms were used to refer to summaries) by Ibn Bihreez, Ibn al-Muqaffa', Ahmad Ibn at-Tayyeb, Ishaq Ibn Hunayn, and al-Kindi.<sup>60</sup> Ibn an-Nadim similarly lists several Aristotelian works including the *Rhetoric* and *De Anima*. One of the historians who raised the issue of genre is Ibn Sa'id al-Andalusi who describes Hunayn's approach to translation as outstanding. In addition to acknowledging that Hunayn was "one of the best translators of the Islamic era" and "had perfect knowledge of both Arabic and Greek," Ibn Sa'id says that Hunayn "translated and *clarified* the works of Hippocrates and Galen and *condensed* them in the best possible way."<sup>61</sup> He also mentions that *Hisab al-Ghubar*, an Indian mathematical work, was simplified by al-Khuwarizmi.<sup>62</sup>

Selectivity was a major characteristic of the Translation Movement and it gave rise to the emergence of several summary genres. Medieval historian Ibn Abi Usaybia' explains that translators conveyed the important ideas and deliberately ignored anything that was not relevant to their needs. He emphasizes that this was neither out of ignorance nor misunderstanding, and that their lack of

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58 The lecture by Santala is cited by the editor of Ibn Abi Usaybia's history. Ibn Abi Usaybia', *Uyun al-Anba'* (see note 13), 42.

59 Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (see note 11), 505–06.

60 Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (see note 11), 511–12.

61 Al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World* (see note 14), 33.

62 Al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World* (see note 14), 14.

adherence to the original texts resulted in making some of the translations clearer than the original. For example, in an epistle where he claims to be summarizing Plato's views on the soul, al-Kindi eliminates all the pagan references and inserts monotheistic Islamic ones. Despite the fact that removing integral sections of the source language text and replacing them with parts that are more context and audience-appropriate, al-Kindi describes his treatise as a summary of the views of Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras on the soul and does not give himself any credit for making the treatise as much his own through these changes.<sup>63</sup> Modern scholars of the Translation Movement should therefore question the meaning of the generic labels because, beyond these simple classifications such as the summary, innovative knowledge was regularly included. Similarly, the Arab authors of *The Theology of Aristotle*, a book based on the last four books of the *Enneads* and wrongly attributed to Aristotle, omit the lengthy pagan passages of the original *Enneads*<sup>64</sup> because they were not relevant to the cultural context of Islamic Baghdad. What constituted an important idea depended on the needs of the translation sponsor and the cultural context in which the translations took place.

The commentary was a major genre produced within translation circles. The most known of these are Ibn Sina's and Ibn Rushd's short, middle, and long commentaries on the Aristotelian logical curriculum, but these were written outside of the immediate scope of the Translation Movement. Al-Farabi's commentaries on Aristotle's work were written within the time frame of the Translation Movement and served as the foundation for the later commentaries by Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd. According to Ibn an-Nadim, al-Farabi's mentor, Matta Ibn Yunnus also wrote commentaries on *Posterior Analytics*, *Sophistical Refutations*, *Poetics*, Alexander's commentary on *De Caleo*, and *On Generation and Corruption*.<sup>65</sup> Matta Ibn Yunnus authored his own books including one on the conditional syllogism.<sup>66</sup> The variety of genres indicates that the translations were not always strictly faithful to the original, but varied according to their context and needs of their sponsors.

Translation, explanation, and summary were three distinct processes at times, and overlapped at other times. They represented different options or methods that the translators had at their disposal when they handled a foreign work. A book or manuscript was not necessarily translated, then summarized and/or explained. It could have been summarized or explained straight from the

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<sup>63</sup> See Ya'qub ibn Ishaq Al-Kindi, *Rasa'il al-Kindi al-Falsafiyah*, ed. Muhammad A. Abu Rida (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1950).

<sup>64</sup> Peter Adamson, "Two Early Arabic Doxographies on the Soul: Al-Kindi and 'The Theology of Aristotle,'" *The Modern Schoolman* 77 (2000): 105–26.

<sup>65</sup> Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (see note 11), 534.

<sup>66</sup> Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (see note 11), 535.



source language. One work that was introduced in different genres is Ptolemy's *Almagest*. According to Ibn Sa'id:

some scientists explained some of [*Almagest*'s] parts and clarified some of its contents, such as al-Fadl Ibn Hatim al-Nayryzi, while others abbreviated it and rendered it more accessible, such as Muhammad Ibn Jabir al-Battani. Understanding his book and the arrangement of its parts was the goal of the scientists who came after him; they worked and competed to attain this goal.<sup>67</sup>

Ibn Sa'id also mentions an Ahmad Ibn Kathir al-Farghani, who wrote summaries (*jawami'*) of thirty chapters of *Almagest* in one of his books.<sup>68</sup>

The question of genre is integral to understanding the nature and degree of innovation that Arab thinkers introduced within the larger framework of the Translation Movement. While attempting to read works by medieval Arab thinkers that claim to be summaries of or commentaries on previous classical works, it is important that scholars approach these works with an open mind and the knowledge that these generic references include a substantial amount of original work that is simply mislabeled and unfairly represents the work of these philosophers. The work of al-Kindi and al-Farabi is an example of such confusion that can result from the generic labeling of their work.

### Part 3: Translation Processes and Solving Translation Problems

Translation and the knowledge-making apparatus that evolved around it were complex processes complicated by factors such as the competence of the translator, the availability of adequate manuscripts of the source text, and the existence of an Arabic terminology suited to writing in a certain field of knowledge. Perfecting writing in a certain field in Arabic and creating an Arabic terminology sometimes evolved over the course of centuries and across different Islamic centers of learning. One of the challenges that the translators encountered was the translation of terms, a problem that was carried over to the second Arabic Translation Movement in Toledo.

Endress, drawing from his own research on al-Kindi's translation circle, which dealt mostly with philosophical works, describes the translation process adopting what he describes as the "complexes" approach, a process where many

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<sup>67</sup> Al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World* (see note 14), 28.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World* (see note 14), 77.

intersecting factors contributed to the style adopted by a specific translation circle.<sup>69</sup> According to Endress, different styles of translating can be witnessed in translations that belong to the same phase. For example, the translation of the *Metaphysics* by Ustat is literal while that of the *Theology of Aristotle/Enneads* is not, even though both works were contemporary and translated in the same circle headed by al-Kindi. Moreover, the same style of translation can be witnessed in different phases. The complexes that Endress proposes that scholars consider while evaluating the degree of literalness or freedom of a translation include: the source language from which the Arabic translation was made<sup>70</sup>; the fact that later translations were revisions of older versions; “theoretical contaminations,” or the incorporation of commentary within the translation; “applied contaminations,” or the terminology and usage based on the research of sponsor scholars; the varied levels of the competencies of the translators; and the fact that the approach and purpose of the translation was usually a paraphrase. Endress’s analysis produced the following list of characteristics, or “guide fossils,” of the translation style of the school: the use of transliterated Greek and Persian words; stylistic influence of Alexandrian lecture-course style on the phraseology; of the translations (use of introductory, summarizing, transitional, and connecting phrases); and an interpretation through a neo-Platonic lens while eliminating the neo-Platonic plurality of deities.<sup>71</sup>

Another prominent translation circle was Hunayn’s, mostly producing medical translations and research. According to E. G. Browne: “To render the medical works of the Greeks into their own language [the old Arabs] had ... to invent new terms translated or imitated from the Greek ... but they already possessed a fairly copious anatomical vocabulary.”<sup>72</sup> The level of competence of some of the Arabic translators sometimes interfered with the coining of accurate Arabic terms. Hunayn uses Arabic terminology which was adopted by the entire Arabic medical science community. On the other hand, Yahya Ibn Massawayah used Syriac or Persian terms because he lacks the Arabic word. Ibn Abi Usaybia’ tells us that the person who produced the first translation of the *Materia Medica*

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<sup>69</sup> See Gerhard Endress, “The Circle of al-Kindi: Early Arabic Translations from the Greek and the Rise of Islamic Philosophy,” *The Ancient Traditions in Christian and Islamic Hellenism: Studies on the Transmission of Greek Philosophy and Sciences Dedicated to H. J. Drossaart Lulofs on His Nineteenth Birthday*, ed. Gerhard Endress and Remke Kruk. CNWS Publications, 50 (Leiden: CNWS, 1997), 43–76. See also Dimitri Gutas, “Aspects of Literary Form and Genre in Arabic Logical Works,” *Glosses and Commentaries on Arabic Logical Texts: The Syriac, Arabic and Medieval Latin Traditions*, ed. Charles Burnett (London: Warburg Institute, 1993), 29–76.

<sup>70</sup> These include but are not limited to Greek, Sanskrit, Pahlavi, and Syriac.

<sup>71</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 146.

<sup>72</sup> Meyerhof, “New Light” (see note 1), 712.

of Dioscorides from Greek into Arabic, Istifan, one of Hunayn's students, was not able to translate most of the drug names. Hunayn revised Istifan's translation, but it is the Spanish-Arabic scholars (after 951 C.E.) who produced an entirely new and complete Arabic version of this volume at the court of Abdur-Rahman III, Caliph of Cordoba. The famous physician Ibn Juljul revised the work in 982 C.E.<sup>73</sup>

Style and readability – in addition to scientific and semiotic accuracy – were two qualities that the translators worked diligently to perfect. Bergstrasser, in comparing Hunayn's translation work to his nephew's and student's, Hubaysh, claims:

The correctness is greater; however one is left with the impression that this is not the result of anxious effort, but of a free and sure mastery over the language. This is seen in the easier adaptation to the Greek original and the striking exactness of expression attained without verbosity. It is all this that which constitutes the famous *fasaha* (eloquence) of Hunayn.<sup>74</sup>

This is an advantage that the Arabic Translation Movement had over the earlier Syriac translations. According to Hunayn's *Risala* these earlier attempts were "very bad." This view is confirmed by M. Pognon, who comments on a Syriac version of Hippocrates's aphorisms that he edited:

The Syrian translators, when they found a difficult passage, too often contented themselves with rendering each Greek word by a Syriac word without in any way seeking to write an intelligible sentence. Thus we find in their translations many incorrect sentences, and even expressions which have absolutely no meaning.<sup>75</sup>

By comparison, Pognon credits Hunayn with improving the translation process by studying Greek, seeking to correct manuscripts of the Greek books, and striving to understand the meaning of these texts before he began to translate.<sup>76</sup>

Translation was an elaborate and time-consuming process the quality of which improved as the translators gained more experience and as better-quality manuscripts (complete or clearer versions) that were still extant became available; thus, revision was at the heart of the process. Of the Galenic text, *Methodus Medendi*, Hunayn informs us that "Sergios translated this book into Syriac, the first six parts, when he was yet weak and inexperienced in translation work. He translated the remaining eight parts when he had acquired experience so that he did this version better than that of the first six parts."<sup>77</sup> Hunayn is equally critical

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<sup>73</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 705–06.

<sup>74</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 713.

<sup>75</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 711.

<sup>76</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 711.

<sup>77</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 692.

of his own process and honestly admits his own shortcomings when he discloses that he had to revise his translation of *De Typis*:

I translated it first for Jibril Ibn Bukhtishu' when I was a youth; this was the first of Galen's books which I translated into Syriac. Later on, after having attained ripe manhood I revised the text and found a certain number of faults which I corrected with diligence, as I wished to have a copy for my son. I translated it moreover into Arabic for Abul Hassan Ahmad Ibn Musa.<sup>78</sup>

He describes his process of revision using the example of yet another medical work:

I translated [*De Sectis*] when I was a young man ... from a very defective Greek manuscript. Later on, when I was about forty years old, my pupil Hubaysh asked me to correct it after having collected a certain number of Greek manuscripts. Thereon I collated these so as to produce one correct manuscript, and I compared this manuscript with the Syriac text and corrected it. I am in the habit of proceeding thus in all my translation work. Some years later I translated it into Arabic for Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Musa.<sup>79</sup>

Translation in Abbasid Baghdad took place in professional organizations known as translation circles and was often a collaborative activity. The collaboration can be attributed to the existence of several manuscripts of the same text that the translators needed to compare and to arrive at a consensus as to which one was the best available version if major differences existed. More than one translator would have been needed depending on the number of manuscripts available. Moreover, sometimes a previous translation existed that needed to be revised when a new manuscript in the original language surfaced or when the quality of the initial translation was in question. This case also necessitated the collaboration of more than one person. Hunayn's account explains why collaboration was a necessary thing to do:

Salmawaih urged me to correct the second half [of a translation of a medical text] for him believing that this would be easier than to make a new version. So he collated with me a part of the seventh section, he holding in his hand the Syriac version while I held the Greek text, he reading the Syriac and I telling him of any variations from the Greek text and suggesting corrections.<sup>80</sup>

The collaboration at times took the shape of one senior translator revising or correcting the work of a less experienced one, something that Hunayn repeatedly did.

A final characteristic of the translation process is the passion and drive that pushed the translators to go through the agonizing process of pursuing sources,

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<sup>78</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 692.

<sup>79</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 690–91.

<sup>80</sup> Meyerhof, "New Light" (see note 1), 692.

translating, and continuously revising their work. Hunayn provides a passionate account of such a pursuit: “I personally could not make up my mind to translate any part of [the incomplete parts of this book *De Demonstratione*] without having read them to the very end on account of their incompleteness and of the *longing of the soul* to find a complete version of this book.”<sup>81</sup> In another account he states: “I sought for it *earnestly* and travelled in search for it.”<sup>82</sup>

The high expectations and pay required a supreme level of professionalism that was accomplished through training, collaboration, and a focus on revision. All of these elements that were not available in previous attempts in the history of translating canonical works and may explain not only the longevity of the Translation Movement, but its major contribution to the advancement of many fields of learning.

## Conclusion

In this paper I have focused only on a few branches of knowledge by way of example to illustrate the goals, contributions, and processes of the Translation Movement. However, translation was prevalent in many fields including professional and theoretical fields. Translation was necessary to sustain the professional education that produced secretaries, inheritance lawyers, engineers, and economists for the Abbasid society.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, the development of theoretical sciences was necessary for the production of successful applications as the section on astronomy above illustrates through the accounts of Ibn Sa’id al-Andalusi.

Generally speaking, the medieval Arabic Translation Movement was characterized by high demand, significant salaries, professionalism, and manifold forms and expressions of power. At the heart of all this was travel; scholars traveled to learn the foundations of fields such as medicine; they traveled to build observatories in favorable cities in the empire; and they traveled in pursuit of extant manuscripts that formed the backbone of the Translation Movement. It is as a result of all this travel that texts were translated, synthesized, put to the test, challenged, and sometimes replaced by more credible and advanced versions.

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<sup>81</sup> Meyerhof, “New Light” (see note 1), 707.

<sup>82</sup> Meyerhof, “New Light” (see note 1), 690.

<sup>83</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought* (see note 10), 110–15.

Chiara Benati

# Against the Dangers of Travel: Journey Blessings and Amulets in the Medieval and Early Modern Germanic Tradition

In the Middle Ages traveling was often connected with a great deal of fatigue and danger: whether on foot, on horseback or by sea, travelers had to face the challenge represented by uneven and muddy roads, storms and bad weather and were at constant risk of being attacked by robbers, wild animals or pirates. As highlighted by Norbert Ohler,<sup>1</sup> in fact, traveling conditions in the Middle Ages strongly resembled the experience described by the Apostle Paul in his Second Letter to the Corinthians (11: 25–27):

Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

Nevertheless, mobility belonged to medieval everyday life,<sup>2</sup> and many medieval people of different social classes and statuses traveled, whether they wished or not. Fear and scarce desire for travel gave rise to a specific genre of blessings (in German, *Ausfahrtsegen* or *Reisesegen*) and rituals aimed at obtaining protection while on the road and at ensuring for oneself or a beloved person a safe comeback.<sup>3</sup>

This contribution focuses on journey charms, blessings, and amulets in the Germanic language area on the basis of a wide corpus of English, German, and Scandinavian texts, paying particular attention to the insertion and/or

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<sup>1</sup> Norbert Ohler, *Reisen im Mittelalter* (Düsseldorf and Zürich: Artemis & Winkler, 2004), 13.

<sup>2</sup> See also Marianne O'Doherty and Felicitas Schmieder, "Introduction: Travels and Mobilities in the Middle Ages From the Atlantic to the Black Sea," *Travels and Mobilities in the Middle Ages. From the Atlantic to the Black Sea*, ed. Marianne O'Doherty and Felicitas Schmieder. International Medieval Research, 21 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), ix–xliii; here xxxi.

<sup>3</sup> See also Albert Bettex, "Reisesegen," *Du: kulturelle Monatsschrift* 5 (1945): 44; F. Ohrt, "Ausfahrtsegen (Reisesegen)," *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Vol. 1: Aal – Butzemann, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927), col. 726–27.

transformation of these blessings and prayers into literary texts. In some cases, journey blessings are hardly distinguishable from other kinds of formulas,<sup>4</sup> such as weapon blessings (German *Waffensegen*),<sup>5</sup> judicial blessings (German *Gerichtsseggen*),<sup>6</sup> and morning prayers (German *Morgensegen*),<sup>7</sup> since protection from the dangers of travel, war, and trials are often included into the larger frame of generic protection blessings and amulets.

## The English Tradition

One of the oldest and most famous Germanic journey protection formulas is represented by the Old English journey charm preserved in the eleventh-century manuscript Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41, on the outer margins of p. 350–53.<sup>8</sup> This text, which has been repeatedly edited, poses significant problems on both textual<sup>9</sup> and interpretative level. As far as interpretation is concerned, its traditional

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<sup>4</sup> See also Ohrt, “Ausfahrtsegen” (see note 3), col. 726.

<sup>5</sup> On this, see also F. Ohrt, “Waffensegen,” *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Vol. 9: *Waage – Zypresse*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1938–1941), col. 23–24.

<sup>6</sup> See also F. Ohrt, “ungerechter Mann (Segen),” *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Vol. 8: *Silber – Vulkan*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1937), col. 1416–19.

<sup>7</sup> See also Gustav Jungbauer, “Morgen,” *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Vol. 6: *Mauer – Pflugbrot*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1935), col. 576–78; here 578. On the impossibility of distinguishing between journey and morning blessings, see also Hugo Moser, “Vom Weingartner Reisesegen zu Walthers Ausfahrtsegen. Gereimte Gebetssegen des frühen und hohen Mittelalters,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 82 (1961): 69–90; here 72–73.

<sup>8</sup> According to Menner in his introduction to *The Poetical Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, ed. Robert J. Menner. The Modern Language Association of America. Monograph Series, 13 (New York: The Modern Language Association of America; London: Oxford University Press, 1941), 2–3, the handwriting in which this text was written can be dated as late eleventh or early twelfth century. See also Godfrid Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), 216–19.

<sup>9</sup> The dimension of the controversy around this text is usually given by the fact that Ferdinand Holthausen, “Zu altenglischen Dichtungen,” *Beiblatt zur Anglia: Mitteilungen über englische Sprache und Literatur und über englischen Unterricht* 31 (1920): 25–32; “Zu den altenglischen Zaubersprüchen und Segen,” *Beiblatt zur Anglia: Mitteilungen über englische Sprache und Literatur und über englischen Unterricht* 31 (1920): 116–20; “Der altenglische Reisesegen,” *Beiblatt zur Anglia: Mitteilungen über englische Sprache und Literatur und über englischen Unterricht* 40 (1929): 87–91; “Nochmals der altenglische Reisesegen,” *Beiblatt zur Anglia: Mitteilungen über englische Sprache und Literatur und über englischen Unterricht* 41 (1930): 255, suggests 66 emendations. See also Heather Lesley Stuart, “A Critical Edition of some Anglo-Saxon Charms and Incantations,”

designation as a ‘journey’ charm is not unproblematic: as pointed out by Amies, in fact, its resemblance with the lorical and homiletic tradition might suggest that the journey, for which the speaking first person is invoking help, is no specific expedition, but rather the journey of life and, possibly, the journey of his soul after death.<sup>10</sup> In particular the images of the *siðfæt godne* (“good voyage”) and of the *smylte and lihte wind wereþum* (“calm and light wind to the shores”) echo those of the sea, which were used, in ecclesiastical Latin writing and consequently in vernacular elegies such as *The Wanderer* or *The Seafarer* (tenth century), “as a symbol for human life on earth, or the wordly life.”<sup>11</sup>

The very definition of this text as a ‘charm’ and its consequent association with other Old English charms and incantations constitutes another controversial point.<sup>12</sup> If compared with other metrical formulas, the journey charm shows a clear predominance of Christian elements and references, which can only be found in the so-called “cattle-theft charms.”<sup>13</sup> In contrast to the cattle-theft charms, however, the journey charm does not operate on the basis of sympathetic or antipathetic magic<sup>14</sup> and does not use biblical references as direct or narrative analogies.<sup>15</sup> Even the invocation to Moses, Jacob, David and Joseph – all famous individuals with relevant travel experience – cannot be read as a direct analogy for the desired effect of the charm, since the text “proceeds to invoke other sanctified beings instead of expressing such an expected statement as ‘Just as you have

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Ph.D. diss., Flinders University of South Australia, Adelaide, 1976, 452–68, and *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 216–19.

10 Marion Amies, “The Journey Charm: A Loric for Life’s Journey,” *Neophilologus* 67.3 (1983): 448–62; here 448.

11 G. V. Smithers, “The Meaning of *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*,” *Medium Ævum* 26 (1957): 137–53; here 150.

12 Stuart, “A Critical Edition,” (see note 9), 23–24, distinguishes between the two terms defining a charm as “any recipe that contains a magical formula” and an incantation as “any magical formula designed to be spoken, chanted or sung.”

13 See also Chiara Benati, “Painted Eyes, Magical Sieves and Carved Runes: Charms for Catching and Punishing Thieves in the Medieval and Early Modern Germanic Tradition,” *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time: The Occult in Pre-Modern Sciences, Medicine, Literature, Religion, and Astrology*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 20 (Berlin and Boston: Walter De Gruyter, 2017), 149–218.

14 See also Heather Stuart, “‘Ic me þisse gyrde beluce’: The Structure and Meaning of the Old English Journey Charm,” *Medium Ævum* 50 (1981): 259–73; here 261.

15 See also Sanda Golopendia, “Towards a Typology of Romanian Love Charms,” *Charms and Charming in Europe*, ed. Jonathan Roper (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 145–87; here 152. Cf. also the contributions to *The Power of Words: Studies on Charms and Charming in Europe*, ed. James Kapaló, Éva Pócs and William Ryan (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013).



journeyed in safety, so may I journey in safety’.”<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, parallels to the text can be found, as mentioned before, in Old English elegies and, in particular, in *The Seafarer*,<sup>17</sup> the final exhortation of which shows strong similarities with the journey charm. Moreover, analogies can also be found between the final prayer of the journey charm and other poetic prayers incorporated within longer texts, such as Byrthnoth’s dying prayer in *The Battle of Maldon* (tenth or eleventh century).<sup>18</sup> Finally, some resemblances can be highlighted with Medieval Irish *loricae*,<sup>19</sup> a highly stylized form of hymn-charms deriving their name from the

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16 Stuart, “‘Ic me þisse gyrde” (see note 14), 261. Holthausen “Zu den altenglischen Zaubersprüchen” (see note 9), 119, and “Nochmals der altenglische Reisesegen” (see note 9), 255 proposed an emendation aimed at inserting in the text a simile of this kind.

17 *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (Morningside Height, NY: Columbia University Press, 1936), 146–47: “Uton we hycgan hwær we ham agen, / ond þonne gepencan hu we þider cumen, / ond we þonne eac tilien, þæt we to moten / in þa ecan eadignesse, / þær is lif gelong in lufan dryhtnes, / hyht in heofonum. Þæs sy þam halgan þonc, / þæt he usic geweorþade, wuldres ealdor, / ece dryhten, in ealle tid. Amen” (*Old and Middle English c. 890–c.1450. An Anthology*, ed. Elaine Trehearne [Malden, MA, Oxford, and Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010], 67: “Let us consider where we may have a home, and then reflect upon how we could come there and then we may also strive so that we could come there into that eternal blessedness, where there is life to be obtained in the love of God, hope in heaven. Thanks be the Holy One that has exalted us, Prince of glory, eternal Lord, through all time. Amen.”)

18 *The Anglo-Saxon Minor* (see note 9), 11–12: “Gepancie þe, ðeoda waldend, / ealra þæra wynna þe ic on worulde gebad. / Nu ic ah, milde metod, mæste þearfe / þæt þu minum gaste godes geunne, / þæt min sawul to ðe siððan mote / on þin geweald, þeoden engla, / mid friþe ferian. Ic eom frymde to þe / þæt hi helseaðan hynan ne moton.” (*Old and Middle English* (see note 17), 163: “I thank you, Lord of nations, for all of the joys that I have experienced in this world. Now I have, merciful God, most need that you grant a benefit to my spirit, that my soul might journey to you into your power, Lord of angels, to travel in peace. I beg you that thieves from hell will not be permitted to injure it.”)

19 According to *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine*, ed. J. H. G. Grattan and Charles Singer. Publications of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, New Series, 3 (London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1952), 70–71, the Old English journey charm should be considered an example of *lorica*. Similarly, Leslie K. Arnovick, *Written Reliquaries: The Resonance of Orality in Medieval English Texts*. Pragmatics & Beyond, 153 (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006), 117, who observes how an Englishman pronouncing the charm might notice its similarity with the language of the *loricae*. A reading of the text as a *lorica* can also be found in Amies, “The Journey Charm” (see note 10). Stuart, “‘Ic me þisse gyrde” (see note 14), 261–62, argues, on the other hand, that the idea of the breastplate as a symbol for spiritual protection has a biblical basis (see also Isaiah 59: 17; 1 Thessalonians 5: 8; and Ephesians 6: 13–17) where it is always mentioned – as in the Old English journey charm – as one of the parts of the complete armor along with and as equal to the helmet and the shield. In Irish *loricae*, on the contrary, the breastplate (or coat of mail) has a greater protective value than the helmet, sword or shield. For this reason, it is not correct to describe the Old English journey charm as a *lorica*.

common belief that they could be used as breastplates (< Latin *lorica*, -ae “armor, coat of mail”).<sup>20</sup>

For these reason, Stuart argues that this text should be considered primarily as a work of literature and that, despite its similarities with the Middle High German *Reisesegen*, “it contains elaborately and sensitively wrought images not to be expected in a charm.”<sup>21</sup> In particular, the use of the image of the protective circle, which is given many different forms within the poem, makes the Old English journey charm poetically more interesting than its High German counterparts. Furthermore, the recognition of the idea of the protective circle as a poetic image could help understanding the first half-line *Ic me on þisse gyrde beluce* and its relationship to the second one *and on Godes helde bebeode*, which have traditionally been quite a headache for editors, translators and commentators.<sup>22</sup> If, in fact, this image clearly derives from magical practice and from a magical symbol, as witnessed by its repeated occurrence in Anglo-Saxon charms,<sup>23</sup> in the Old English journey charm this symbol becomes part of the complex poetic imagery, which is typical of a work of art.<sup>24</sup>

That the Old English journey charm, in its present form, cannot be considered fully representative of the actual Anglo-Saxon magical practice has also

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**20** On this genre see also Eleanor Hull, “The Ancient Hymn-Charms of Ireland,” *Folk-Lore* 21 (1910): 417–46.

**21** Stuart, “‘Ic me þisse gyrde’ (see note 14), 259.

**22** *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England. Being a Collection of Documents, for the Most Part Never Before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in This Country before the Norman Conquest*. Vol. 1, ed. Oswald Cockayne (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), 389; Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (see note 8), 221 and Felix Grendon, “Anglo-Saxon Charms,” *The Journal of American Folklore* XXII (1909): 105–237; here 177, all translate *gyrd* as “rod,” but argue it was probably a cross, even though this interpretation is not supported by any direct evidence in other Old English texts. Similarly, Otto B. Schlutter, “Anglo-Saxonica. (Fortsetzung aus Bd. XXX, Heft 3, 394–400),” *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* 31 (1908): 55–71; here 61. Holthausen “Zu den altenglischen Zaubersprüchen” (see note 10), 89, and “Nochmals der antenglische Reisesegen” (see note 10), 255, suggest that a walking stick could be meant; F. Klaeber, “*Belucan* in dem altenglischen Reisesegen,” *Beiblatt zur Anglia: Mitteilungen über englische Sprache und Literatur und über englischen Unterricht* 40 (1929): 283–84, speaks of a ceremonial staff; *The Anglo-Saxon Minor* (see note 9), 216, translates *gyrd* simply as “staff,” while Gert Sandmann, “Studien zu altenglischen Zaubersprüchen,” Ph.D. diss., University of Münster, 1975, 24, hypothesizes the term could indicate a green rod, partially still in leaf, which has been cut for the occasion. Slightly less controversial is the rendering of the verb *belucan*: only Cockayne translates it as “to fortify,” while all other scholars choose a rendering which is connected with the activity of drawing a line or a circle.

**23** See, for example, Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (see note 8), 299. See also Stuart, “‘Ic me þisse gyrde’ (see note 14), 265.

**24** See also Stuart, “‘Ic me þisse gyrde’ (see note 14), 268.

been underlined by Katrin Rupp who considers it an example of that transitional state between orality and literacy,<sup>25</sup> which Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe calls "transitional literacy."<sup>26</sup> In her reading of the text, Rupp suggests that it reflects some of the anxieties connected with the transformation of spoken words into written, voiceless, signs and that it draws an analogy between the charm's speaker and the scribe. In particular, the address to the Evangelists could be read as indicative of the scribe's hope for guidance in his task.<sup>27</sup>

This poetic text, which has been so extensively studied, is usually referred to as *the* Old English journey charm and it certainly represents the most interesting of this genre. Nevertheless, it is not the only Old English magical text aimed at magically dealing with travel issues. In the first book of *Bald's Leechbook* we find, for example, a remedy prescribing the use of mugwort against travel fatigue, in which the effectiveness of the herb can be reinforced by the act of pronouncing a formula:

Wip miclum 3on3e ofer land þy læs he teorize muc3wyr  
nime him on hand oþþe do on his sco þy læs he meþize 7  
þonne he niman wille ær sunnan up3anze cweþe þas word  
ærest. Tellam te artemesia ne lassus sum in uia.  
zesena hie þonne hie þonne þu upteo.<sup>28</sup>

[For a long journey over land, in case he gets tired, let him take mugwort in his hand or do it in his shoe, if he is exhausted. And if he wants to take it, may he first pronounce these words before the sunrise: 'I take you, mugwort, so that I don't get tired on the way.' Sign it with the sign of the cross when you pull it up.]

The Latin formula (*Tellam te artemesia ne lassus sum in uia*) is associated with two specific ritual elements: it has to be pronounced before sunrise and the herb must be signed with the sign of the cross.

The cross becomes the central element of another English journey blessing, which is transmitted in Stockholm, Kungliga bibliotek, Cod. Holm X 90 (early fifteenth century)<sup>29</sup>:

Helpe, crosse, fayrest of tymbris three,  
In braunchys berynge bothe frute and flowr;

<sup>25</sup> Katrin Rupp, "The Anxiety of Writing: A Reading of the Old English *Journey Charm*," *Oral Tradition* 23.2 (2008): 255–66; here 256.

<sup>26</sup> Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Songs: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse*. Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 5.

<sup>27</sup> See also Rupp, "The Anxiety of Writing" (see note 25), 259–60.

<sup>28</sup> *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft*. Vol. 2 (see note 22), 154–55. See also Heather Stuart, "Zur Interpretation der Reisesegen," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 97 (1978): 2–15; here 3.

<sup>29</sup> See also Russell Hope Robbins, "Medical Manuscripts in Middle English," *Speculum* 45.3 (1970): 393–415; here 394.

Helpe, banere beste, my fon to doo flee,  
 Staf and strencthyng full of socowr;  
 On londe, on see, where þat I be,  
 Fro fyrir brennyng be me by-forne,  
 Now, Cristis tree, sygne of pyte,  
 Helpe me euir, I be nowght lorne!<sup>30</sup>

This Middle English text can, in fact, be described as a prayer to the Holy Cross, in which the petitioner begs divine intervention to make his enemies flee, as well constant support and assistance both on land and at sea, in order never to be lost. The invocation to the Cross – which is here referred to as the most beautiful of the timber trees (*fayrest of tymbris three*), on whose branches both fruits and flowers grow (*In braunchys berynge bothe frute and flowr*), and the best of the banners (*banere beste*) – is a recurrent motif<sup>31</sup> in generic protection prayers and amulets<sup>32</sup> throughout the Germanic language area,<sup>33</sup> which can, among other things, include protection against the dangers of travel, as in this case, where the petitioner invokes help both for his journey and against enemies.

## The German Tradition

Journey blessings are quite well-represented in the German language area too, where they are attested from the twelfth century onward. One of the earliest

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**30** Ferdinand Holthausen, “Rezepte, Segen und Zaubersprüche aus zwei Stockholmer Handschriften,” *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* 19 (1897): 75–88; here 85. See also George Stephens, “Extracts in Prose and Verse from an Old Medical Manuscript, preserved in the Royal Library at Stockholm,” *Archaeologia or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity* 30 (1844): 349–418; here 398.

**31** On the origin and the development of this motif, see Bernhard Bischoff, “Ursprung und Geschichte eines Kreuzsegens,” *Volk und Volkstum. Jahrbuch für Volkskunde in Verbindung mit der Görres-Gesellschaft* 1 (1936): 225–31.

**32** On this see also Chiara Benati, “À la guerre comme à la guerre but with caution: Protection Charms and Blessings in the Germanic Tradition,” *Revista Brathair* 17.1 (2017): 155–91; here 165–77.

**33** In the English tradition, the Cross is mentioned – along with the measure of the length of the body of Christ – in some fifteenth-century scrolls, which seem to have been used as a birth girdle, such as, for example, London, British Library, Rotulus Harley MS 43. A 14. See also Curt Bühler, “Prayers and charms in certain Middle English scrolls,” *Speculum* 39 (1964): 270–78 and Mary Morse, “Alongside St Margaret: The Childbirth Cult of SS Quiricus and Julitta in Late Medieval English Manuscripts,” *Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe 1350–1550. Packaging and Consumption*, ed. Emma Cayley and Susan Powell. Exeter Studies in Medieval Europe (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 187–206.

High German (Alamanic) blessings of this kind can be found in Sarnen, Bibliothek des Benediktinerkollegiums, Cod. membr. 69, fol. 8v–9r (end of the twelfth century):

Herre sancte michahel hute wistv .N. sin shilt unde sin sper. min frovwa sancta maria si sin halsperge. hvte mvoze er indeme heiligin fride sin. da got inne ware. do er indaz paradise chame. Herre got du mvozist in bescirmin. uor wage. unde for wafine. uor fivre. uor allen sinen fiandin gisunlichen unde ungisunlichin. er mvoze also wol giseginot sin. so daz heilige wizzot ware. daz min herre sancte iohannes mime herrin dim almehtin gote in dem munt flozte. do ern indeme iordane tovfte. AMEN.<sup>34</sup>

[Lord Saint Michael protect .N., his shield and his spear. May my Lady Holy Mary be his gorget. Today he must enjoy the holy peace, which God enjoyed when he came in Heaven. Lord God, you must protect him against waves and weapons, against fire and against all his enemies, both visible and invisible. He must be as blessed as the Holy Sacrament, which my Lord Saint John put in the mouth of my Lord the omnipotent God, when he baptized him in the Jordan.]

As many other texts of this kind, this blessing originally from Muri offers protection against a wide palette of dangers including waves (storms at sea and, possibly, in an extended sense, also other dangerous situations), fire, weapons and enemies, which suggests this genre of formulas originated in a warrior context.<sup>35</sup> Another recurring element of the genre, which can already be found here, is the use of similes involving Christ and/or the Virgin to describe the state of peace and bliss, which the petitioner would like to achieve for himself or for a third person.

Both the reference to weapons (and, in this case also victory) and the motif of the Virgin's blissful condition when she gave birth to Jesus<sup>36</sup> can also be found in a journey blessing transmitted in a Latin psalter once belonging to the Benedictine monastery of Weingarten and now preserved in Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, Cod. HB II 25, fol. 123v (thirteenth century):

† In nomine † patris † et filii † et spiritus † sancti †.  
Ic dir nach sihe, Ic dir nach sendi  
mit minin funf fingirin funui undi funfzic engili.  
Got mit gisundi heim dich gisendi.

<sup>34</sup> *Altdeutsche Predigten und Gebete aus Handschriften*, ed. Wilhelm Wackernagel (Basel: Schweigahuserische Verlagsbuchhandlung Hugo Richter, 1876), 219. See also Jakob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*. Vol. 3 (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1968), 494–95.

<sup>35</sup> See also Moser, "Vom Weingartner Reisesegen" (see note 7), 71.

<sup>36</sup> On this and other Marian motifs in protection formulas, see also Benati, "À la guerre" (see note 32), 159–63.

offin si dir diz sigidor, sami si dir diz selgidor,<sup>37</sup>  
 Bislozin si dir diz wagidor, sami si dir diz wafindor.  
 des guotin sandi Ulrichis segen [si] vor dir vndi hindir dir vndi hobi dir vndi nebin dir gidan,  
 swa du wonis vndi swa du sis, daz da alsi gut fridi si, alsi da weri, da min fravwi sandi Marie  
 des heiligin Cristis ginas.<sup>38</sup>

[† In the name † of the Father † and of the Son † and of the Holy † Spirit †.  
 I follow you with my eyes, with my five fingers I send fifty-five angels. May God send you  
 back home safely. May the door of victory be open to you, along with the door of bliss (or of  
 the favorable winds for sailing). May the door of storm-waves be closed to you, along with  
 the door of weapons.  
 Good Saint Ulrich's blessing be active in front of you, behind you, above you and beside  
 you, wherever you live and wherever you are, may there be peace, as when my Lady Holy  
 Mary gave birth to the Holy Christ.]

This text, which begins with the Trinitarian formula, can be divided into two parts – a rhymed and a prose one. The rhymed one, which seems to be built around the motif of the person remaining home following with the eyes the person leaving (German *Nachsehen*),<sup>39</sup> shows some interesting stylistic features, such as alliteration (*funf / fingirid / funui / funfzic*; *Got / gisundi / gisendi*; but also within the parallel pairs *sigidor / selgidor* and *wagidor / wafindor*), parallelism (*offin / bislozin*), chiasmus (*sigidor / selgidor – wagidor / wafindor*), and some formulaic expressions which can be found in other journey blessings,<sup>40</sup> but also in other kinds of charms.<sup>41</sup> The text is also rich in numerical symbolism: the five (as the wounds of Christ) fingers of the extended hand send eleven (as the remaining

37 K. Lucae, “Zum Weingartner Reisesegen,” *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 23 (1879): 94, amends *selgildor* to *segildor* “the door to the favorable winds for sailing,” which would antithetically parallel the image of the stormy waters suggested by *wagidor* “the door of storm-waves.”

38 Eleonora Cianci, *Incantesimi e benedizioni nella letteratura tedesca medievale (IX–XIII secolo)*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 717 (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 2004), 197–98. See also Moser, “Vom Weingartner Reisesegen” (see note 7), 69.

39 On this, see also Ruth Schmeckel, “Reise,” *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Vol. 7: *Pflügen – Signatur*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1936), col. 638–44; Moser, “Vom Weingartner Reisesegen” (see note 7), 70; Felix Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde: Alte und neue Aufsätze* (Heilbronn: Verlag von Gebr. Henninger, 1879), 323.

40 The lines *offin si dir diz sigidor, sami si dir diz selgidor, / Bislozin si dir diz wagidor, sami si dir diz wafindor* are also present in the so-called Tobiah's Blessing (German *Tobiassegen*). Furthermore, the phrase *vor wage und vor wafine* “against waves and weapons” can also be found in the above-discussed blessing from Muri.

41 The phrase *gisundi heim gisendi* is not only present in Tobiah's Blessing, but also in two Old High charms aimed, respectively, at preventing bees from escaping (Lorsch Bee Blessing, tenth century) and at protecting dogs (Vienna Dog Blessing, tenth century). See also Cianci, *Incantesimi e benedizioni* (see note 38), 198.

eleven Apostles) guardian angels each. An interesting parallel to this image of the person remaining home sending guardian angels to accompany his/her beloved, who is leaving, can be found in the records of a witch process celebrated in Basel in 1407. These include, in fact, a love spell, in which the speaking first person sends nine werwolves to torture her beloved, so that he cannot forget her.<sup>42</sup>

The second part of the blessing, which, according to some scholars,<sup>43</sup> could have been added at a later stage, contains an invocation to Saint Ulrich, bishop of Augsburg († 973), who is, among other things, patron of travelers.<sup>44</sup>

In the High Middle Ages, journey blessings expand significantly in their dimensions and in their epic parts, probably under the influence of contemporary religious doctrine and homiletics.<sup>45</sup> In this expansion they are often combined with weapon blessings, as it is the case in the so-called *Münchner Ausfahrtsegen* (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 23374, fol. 15v–16r, thirteenth century):

Ich slief mir hînt suoze  
 datz mînes trehtins fuozen.  
 daz heilige himelchint,  
 daz sî hiute mîn frideschilt!  
 daz bat mih hiute ûf stân.  
 in des genâde will ich gân  
 unde will mih gurten  
 in des heiligen gotes worten,  
 daz mir allez daz holt sî  
 daz in deme himel sî,  
 diu sunne und der mîne

42 E[duard] Hoffmann-Krayer, “Zum Eingang des Weingartner Reisesegens,” *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 8 (1905): 65: “Ich sich dir nâch / und sende dir nâch / nûn gewere wolffe: drîe, die dich zerbyssent, / drîe, die dich zerryssent, / drîe, die dir dîn hertzlich blût uss lappent und sûgent. / Und lege dich har zû dieser glût, / dîn sinne und ouch dînen mût, / dîn schlâffen und dîn wachen, / dîn essen und dîn trinken. / Das du mîn in dînem hertzen / ze gûtten nyemer mögest vergessen. / Dir müsse nâch mir werden als wunder wê, / als deme wachse by dem fûre. / Das helffe mir Lutzifer in der helle / und alle sîne gesellen” (I follow you with my eyes and send nine werwolves behind you, three, who bite through you, three, who tear you apart, three, who lick and suck the blood from your heart. And I put you on this flame, your senses and your mind, your sleeping and your waking, your eating and your drinking. May you, in your heart, can never forget me. You must suffer for me as wax in front of the fire. May Lucifer in hell and all his companions help me in this).

43 See also *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler*, ed. Elias von Steinmeyer (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1916), 398 and Cianci, *Incantesimi e benedizioni* (see note 38), 197. This thesis is rejected by Moser, “Vom Weingartner Reisesegen” (see note 7), 70.

44 See also Paul Sartori, “Ulrich, hl.,” *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Vol. 8: *Silber – Vulkan*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1937), col. 1295–97.

45 See also Moser, “Vom Weingartner Reisesegen” (see note 7), 76–77.

unde der tagederne scône.  
 Mîns gemuotes bin ih balt:  
 hiute springe ih, herre, in dînen gewalt.  
 sante Marjen lîchemede  
 daz sî mîn fridhemedel  
 aller mîner vîende wâfen  
 diu ligen unde slâfen  
 und sîn alsô palwâhs,  
 als waere mîner vrouwen vahs  
 dô si den heiligen Christ gebaere  
 und doch ein reiniu meit waere.  
 Mîn houbet sî mir staelîn:  
 dehein wâfen snîde dar in.  
 Mîn swert eine  
 will ih von dem segen sceiden:  
 daz snîde unde bîze  
 allez daz ih ez heize,  
 von mînen handen  
 und von niemens andern.  
 Der heilige himeltrût  
 der sî hiute mîn halsperc quot. Amen.  
 In nomine domini nostri Jhesu Christi, qui est dictus mirabili  
 nomine Tetragrammaton, et in nomine spiritus sancti.  
 In des namen den ih genant hân  
 und in des gnâde ih hiute gân,  
 diu wort sîn mir gewaere  
 als unserem hêrren waere,  
 dem almehtigen gote  
 diu toufe und daz wizzot.  
 mit dem selben segen,  
 dâ mit diu toufe und der chresem  
 und daz wizzot wurde gesegent,  
 dâ sî ih hiute mit gesegent  
 vor viwer unt vor wâge,  
 vor aller slahte wâfen,  
 vor houpthaftigen sunden,  
 vor werltlîchen scanden,  
 vor unrehtem tôde:  
 miserere nobis.  
 Amen, alsô sî daz wâre, als daz unser hêrre got von  
 sant Marîen meit wesende geborn wart, Amen.<sup>46</sup>

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**46** Verena Holzmann, “*Ich beswer dich wurm vnd wyrmin ...*”. *Formen und Typen altdeutscher Zaubersprüche und Segen*. Wiener Arbeiten zur germanischen Altertumskunde und Philologie, 36 (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2001), 270–71.



[Last night I fell asleep sweetly at the feet of my Lord,<sup>47</sup> the Holy heavenly child. May he be my shield today. He asked me to get up today and I want to walk in his grace and I want be surrounded by the Holy God's words. May what is in the sky, the sun and the moon and the beautiful morning star be always favorable to me. I am brave by nature, today I place my complete confidence in You, Lord. May the Holy Mary's cloak be my protective shirt! All the weapons of my enemies lie and sleep and are as blunt as my Lady's hair when she gave birth to the Holy Christ being a virgin. May my head be as hard as steel, so that no sword can cut into it. I only want to exclude my own sword from this blessing: may it cut and bite everything I want to, but only when in my hands and in nobody else's. The Holy Christ be my good gorget today. Amen. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who admirably is called Tetragrammaton<sup>48</sup> and in the name of the Holy Spirit, whose favor I have and in whose grace today I walk, may words be as fruitful for me as the baptism and the sacrament were for our Lord, the omnipotent God. With the same blessing with which the baptism and the confirmation were consecrated may I be blessed today against fire and storm-waves, all kinds of weapons, the deadly sins, earthly disgraces and unjust death. Have mercy on us. Amen, may this be true as it is true that our Lord was born by the Holy Virgin Mary. Amen.]

The theme of weapon blessing is central in this text, in which the petitioner not only wishes his enemies' weapons to become blunt and ineffective, but also his own to become as hard as steel, so that no sword can break it and, at the same time, that his own weapon may be as effective as possible when in his hand and in nobody else's. This very passage suggests that the possibility of being disarmed by the opponent is taken into consideration here, as it is in a later (fifteenth-century) Low German protection blessing specifically addressing weapons, which is transmitted in Stockholm, Kungliga bibliotek, X 113, fol. 34v.<sup>49</sup>

As it is typical of the genre, the text also employs military imagery to describe metaphorically the protection required by the petitioner: may the Christ Child be his shield, Mary's cloak his protective shirt, and Christ his gorget. Another recurring feature which can be highlighted in the *Münchner Ausfahrtsegen* is the image of the protective circle, here represented by God's words surrounding the petitioner.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> The motif of sleeping at the feet of God can also be found in a fifteenth-century Low German prayer transmitted in Stockholm, Kungliga bibliotek, X 113, fol. 34v. Agi Lindgren, *Ein Stockholmer mittelniederdeutsches Arzneibuch aus der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts*. *Acta universitatis stockholmiensis*. Stockholmer germanistische Forschungen, 5 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967), 125.

<sup>48</sup> On this name of God and its use in magical formulas, see Claude Lecouteux, *Dictionnaire des Formules magiques* (Paris: Édition Imago, 2014), 302.

<sup>49</sup> Lindgren, *Ein Stockholmer* (see note 47), 125. On this see also, Benati, "À la guerre" (see note 32), 160–61.

<sup>50</sup> On this, see also Stuart, "Zur Interpretation" (see note 28), 10–12.

The most popular journey blessing in the German language area is certainly the so-called Tobiah's Blessing (German *Tobiassegen*),<sup>51</sup> which derives its name from the epic introduction referring to the biblical episode of Tobit sending his son – Tobiah – to collect some money in Media, and giving him instructions.<sup>52</sup> The popularity of this blessing is witnessed by its manuscript tradition. It is transmitted in at least twenty manuscripts dating to the period comprised between the twelfth and the fifteenth century:

1. Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 2° Cod. 91, fol. 57va–58ra (first half of the fifteenth century)
2. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Hdschr. 228, fol. 50v–52r (third quarter of the fourteenth century)
3. Chur, Staatsarchiv, Cod. B 1, fol. 108r–110v (end of the fifteenth century)
4. Erfurt, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Ampl. 4° 387a (thirteenth century, now lost)
5. Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. 1703 Nr. 363 (end of the thirteenth century)<sup>53</sup>
6. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 5250/21b (first half of the fifteenth century)
7. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 17051, fol. 225r (fourteenth century)<sup>54</sup>
8. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 850, fol. 53v (fifteenth century)<sup>55</sup>
9. Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cod. Cent. VII, 8, fol. 89v, 146r–148v (end of the fourteenth / beginning of the fifteenth century)
10. Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cod. Cent. VII, 38, fol. 203v–205v (first half of the fifteenth century)
11. Nuremberg, Germanische Nationalmuseum, Hs. 5832, fol. 2r–5r (fifteenth century)

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<sup>51</sup> See also Heather Stuart, “Tobiassegen,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. Vol. 9: *Slecht, Reinbold – Ulrich von Liechtenstein*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil, Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), col. 947–49.

<sup>52</sup> See also Tobit 4: 1–21 and 5: 17.

<sup>53</sup> This fragment has been edited by Anton Schönbach and Karl Müllenhoff, “Ein Bruchstück des Tobiassegens,” *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 19 (1876): 495–97. Schönbach's dating – twelfth century – has, however, been modified. See also <http://sosa2.uni-graz.at/sosa/katalog/katalogisate/1703/1703-0363.html> (last accessed on March 11, 2017).

<sup>54</sup> The text has been published by Elias von Steinmeyer in Anton Schönbach and Elias von Steinmeyer, “Zum Tobiassegen,” *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 24 (1880): 182–91; here 189–91.

<sup>55</sup> The blessing has been published in Schönbach and Steinmeyer, “Zum Tobiassegen” (see note 54), 182–89.

12. Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, Mss. theol. 14, fol. 145r–v (end of the fourteenth century in Low German)<sup>56</sup>
13. Solothurn, Zentralbibliothek, Cod. S 194, fol. 102r–v (end of the fifteenth century)
14. Sankt Florian, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. XI 353, fol. 186v–187v (fifteenth century)<sup>57</sup>
15. Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, Cod. C 664, p. 53–54 (thirteenth century)<sup>58</sup>
16. Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Cod. Oct. 72, fol. 50r–53r (1436)
17. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2817, fol. 24v–25v (1370–1390 ca.)<sup>59</sup>
18. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 13045, p. 499–500 (end of the fourteenth / beginning of the fifteenth century)
19. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. 226 Extravagantes (second half of the fifteenth century)
20. Private collection Eis, Heidelberg, Hs. 149, fol. Kr–Xv (first half of the fourteenth century).<sup>60</sup>

A further version of Tobiah's Blessing is included in some<sup>61</sup> of the late medieval adaptations of biblical material, which are known in German as *Historienbibeln* and which are richly transmitted from the fourteenth century onward.<sup>62</sup> Apart

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56 The Low German version of Tobiah's Blessing has been published in Konrad Hofmann, "Ueber einen oberdeutschen Johannessegen," *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Philologische und Historische Klasse* (1871): 456–62; here 458–62.

57 This version of Tobiah's Blessing has been edited in Heather Stuart, "Der Linzer Tobiassegen und die Entwicklung mittelalterlicher Segenssprüche," *Kunstjahrbuch der Stadt Linz* (1980): 67–82.

58 The text has been reproduced with "some conjectural emendations" in *Fundgruben für Geschichte deutscher Sprache und Litteratur*, Part 1, ed. Heinrich Hoffmann (Breslau: Bei Grass, Barth und Comp., 1830), 260–63. See also Holzmann, "Ich beswer dich (see note 46), 290–92.

59 The text of Tobiah's Blessing in this codex, which had been used as A-manuscript in the edition in *Denkmäler deutscher Poesie und Prosa aus dem VIII – XII Jahrhundert*. Vol. 1: *Texte*, ed. Karl Müllenhoff and Wilhelm Scherer (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1892), 183–92, has also been edited diplomatically in Heather Stuart, "Das ist der rechte und wahrhafte Tobiassegen: The Tobiassegen of Vienna Codex 2817," *Euphorion* 74 (1980): 95–112.

60 The fragmentary text has been edited in Bernhard Haage, "Ein mittelhochdeutscher Reise-segen," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 99 (1970): 234–37.

61 *Die deutschen Historienbibeln des Mittelalters nach vierzig Handschriften zum ersten Male herausgegeben*, ed. Theodor Merzdorf. Vol. 2 (Tübingen: L. F. Fues, 1870), 520. See also Johannes Stosch, "Zum Tobiassegen," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 29 (1897): 171–72; Heather Stuart and Fred Walla, "Eine Neuausgabe des mittelalterlichen Tobiassegens," *Daphnis* 11.2 (1982): 777–80.

62 See also Christoph Gerhardt, "Historienbibel," *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, Vol. 4: *Hildegard von Hürnheim – Koburger, Heinrich*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil,

from this high number of versions, another indication of the popularity of the text in the Middle Ages is constituted by the fact that its use was banned by the Church.<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, there is a printed tradition of the blessing, which starts in the eighteenth century and stretches into the early twentieth century. According to Spamer, as late as 1921 copies of Tobiah's Blessing were still sold in the shops selling devotional articles in the famous Austrian pilgrimage church of Mariazell, while in the German-speaking parts of Bohemia it was sold until short before the Second World War.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly enough, the text has changed form over the centuries: while, in fact, in the Middle Ages it was intended for oral recitation, in modern times it became a *Schutzbrief* ("protection letter"), an amulet to be worn. This form shift also corresponds to an expansion and diversification of the blessing's sphere of effectiveness: if originally it was mainly used as a journey blessing,<sup>65</sup> in modern times it became a pain reliever for women in labor and an instrument to make life easier in many ways.<sup>66</sup>

The blessing still lacks a critical edition taking into account the whole manuscript tradition and is usually quoted following the only extant, nineteenth-century, fully-normalized complete edition by Müllenhoff and Scherer.<sup>67</sup> The text can be divided into four parts, which vary significantly from manuscript to manuscript:

1. An introduction, in which Tobit's leave from the son is described. The blessing can be preceded by the title *Sant Tobias Segen* and the first couplet is almost always *Der guote sant Tobias / der gotes weissag waz*;
2. The actual blessing pronounced by Tobit. This is usually some fifty-line long and contains some clear anachronistic invocations to Saint Stephen, Saint Oswald, Saint Gall, and Saint Gertrude;
3. A reprise of the introduction, which connects to the following blessing. This part varies significantly in the different manuscripts;

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Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), col. 67–75.

<sup>63</sup> See also Adolph Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter*. Vol. 2 (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1909), 277.

<sup>64</sup> Adolf Spamer, *Romanusbüchlein. Historischer-philologischer Kommentar zu einem deutschen Zauberbuch* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958), 164.

<sup>65</sup> These texts might have been used more universally, as argued by Stuart, "Zur Interpretation" (see note 28), even though it is almost impossible to know exactly how.

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, J. Klapper, "Das Gebet im Zauberglauben des Mittelalters. Aus schlesischen Quellen," *Mitteilungen der schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde* 18 (1907): 5–41; here 31–32. See also Stuart, "Das ist der rechte" (see note 59), 103.

<sup>67</sup> *Denkmäler deutscher Poesie* (see note 60), 183–92.

4. The final blessing, which is not always present and sometimes is in prose, consisting in the anaphorical repetition of the formula *Nu segen dich got* (“Now I bless you God”) and usually beginning with the mention of Abel.<sup>68</sup>

Particular attention deserves the version transmitted in the Rostock manuscript, which, apart from being the only Low German witness of Tobiah’s Blessing, also “seems to represent a tradition substantially different from the other versions”.<sup>69</sup> While, in fact, all High German versions of the blessing suppress the figure of the archangel Raphael, who – in the biblical account of the episode – guides and protects Tobiah during his journey, the Low German text maintains this biblical element and mentions the archangel both in the introduction and in the final blessing:

Hir beghinnet êne ghûde segheninge van Thôbîas.  
 Thôbîas de sînen sone ût sende  
 myt êneme hillighen engehele tô êneme anderen lande,  
 sîn sone was eme lêf,  
 vil drôvedes môdes he van eme schêd.  
 he ghînk vor eme stân,  
 dâr wart ên hilligh segheninge over dân.  
 he sprak: benedictus  
 dominus deus meus.  
 des hillighen wâren godes sone Crist,  
 des dû, sone, êghene knecht bist,  
 de môte di behôden  
 durch sîne vederlîken ghûde.  
 got hebbe dîner schône  
 vor hungher vor dorst,  
 vor water vor vûr,  
 got de môte di myt sîner hillighen craft sulvuen stûren,  
 dû slâpest edder dû wakest,  
 an holte edder an dake.  
 alle dîne vyende sîn di nedderghet.  
 god de môte di senden wedder  
 vrôliken môdes  
 tô dîneme heymôde.  
 gheseghenet sî dîn wech unde stech berch unde dal.  
 got de lâte dî ummer wol varen.  
 alle dîne beyne  
 grôt unde cleyne  
 sîn dî licht alse ên veddere.

<sup>68</sup> See also Stuart and Walla “Eine Neuausgabe” (see note 61), 779–80 and Stuart, “Tobiassegen” (see note 51), col. 948–49.

<sup>69</sup> Stuart, “*Das ist der rechte*” (see note 59), 102.

de hillighen enghele  
 môten dî behûden sulven  
 ...  
 sunte Johannes Baptiste  
 vorlêne dî ghûde liste,  
 sunte Stephan de stâ dî bi,  
 dat dî deste bett sy.  
 sunte Mâria de ghûde  
 de môte dî behûden  
 vor enghestliken nôden.  
 sunte Mâria de ghûte  
 myt erer hûte  
 môtestû werden ghesalvet unde ghehêlet,  
 dîn sêle werde des hemelríkes nummer unbedêlet,  
 dîn lif der werlíken êre.  
 got môte dî segghenen mêre.  
 de mâne de sunne  
 de schínen dî de wunne,  
 dat paradys dat stâ dî open,  
 de helle vor besloten,  
 de helle vorsperret.  
 alle wâpene sîn vor de verret  
 sunder dîn alleyne,  
 dat ik dâr mede meyne  
 dat dû dâr bî drechst,  
 dat môte snyden unde byten allens dat dû tô dônde hest.  
 Nû bevele ik dy an de hûde,  
 dar myn vrouwe sunte Mâria was an bevolen,  
 myneme hêren sunte Johanse under deme hillighen crûce,  
 dem bevele ik hûte  
 dîn lif unde dîne sêle,  
 dîn gût unde dîne êre.  
 unse hêre út sîneme grave stûnt,  
 de segghene dîn vlêsch unde dîn blôt.  
 de hillighe engel sunte Raphaël,  
 deme de gûde Thobías sînen sone beval,  
 dem bevele ik hûte dîn lif unde dîne sêle.  
 de hillighe vrouwe sunte Ghêrdrût von Nevele  
 de sende dy uppe ghûde herberghe,  
 Amen.<sup>70</sup>

[Here begins a good blessing of Tobiah. Tobit sent his son to another country with a holy angel. He loved his son and he was sad at the idea of departing from him. He went to him and pronounced a holy blessing on him. He said: “Benedictus deus meus. May Christ, the

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70 Hofmann, “Ueber einen oberdeutschen Johannessegen” (see note 56), 458–62.

son of the holy real God, whose servant you are, protect you, son, in his paternal goodness. My God protect you from hunger and thirst, water and fire. May God with his holy force conduct you, both if you sleep and if you are awake, both in the woods and under a roof. May all you enemies be inferior to you. May God send you back home happy. May your path, bridge, mountain and valley be blessed. May God let you always travel well. May all your bones, big and small, be as light as feathers. May holy angels protect you ... may Saint John the Baptist grant you a good equipment, may Saint Stephen be on your side, which is even better. May the good Saint Mary protect you from fearful situations. With the protection of the good Saint Mary may you be saved and healed, may your soul never be deprived of Heaven or your body of real glory. May God bless you more. May the moon and the sun cast a blissful light onto you. May Heaven be open and Hell locked to you. May all weapons be far from you except for your own, I mean the one that you carry, may it cut and bite whatever you have to. Now I bless you in the same way as Mary was entrusted to my Lord Saint John under the holy cross, to him I entrust today your body and your soul, your goods and your honor. Our Lord arose from his grave, may he bless your flesh and blood. The holy angel Saint Raphael, to whom Tobit entrusted his son, to him I entrust today your body and your soul. May the holy Lady Saint Gertrude of Nivelles give a you good accomodation. Amen.”]

Apart from the presence of the archangel Raphael, the Low German blessing differs from its High German counterpart in a series of other details, such as, for example, the weapon blessing, which is addressing both one’s own and other people’s weapons (“May all weapons be far from you except for your own ... may it cut and bite whatever you have to”), while in the High German tradition it is only aimed at not getting hurt by hostile blades. The High German formula *dîn herze sî dir steinlîn, / dîn lîp sî dir beinîn, / dîn houbet sî dir stehelîn* (“may you heart be made of stone, your lips of bone, your head of steel”), on the other hand, is replaced here by *alle dîne beyne / grôt unde cleyne / sîn dî licht also ên veddere* (“May all your bones, big and small, be as light as feathers”), a passage clearly hinting at the fatigue of traveling, while the image of the sky as shield is not present. Moreover, the reference to John 19: 25–27 finds no correpondence in the High German tradition.

Another very popular journey blessing is that connected to the tradition of the ritual of drinking the so-called *Johannisminne* (“Saint John’s love”) or *Johannisseggen* (“Saint John’s blessing”) before undertaking a journey or some other kind of important and dangerous endeavor,<sup>71</sup> which is often referred to in Middle High

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71 The origin of this ritual has to be searched in the legend, according to which Saint John the Evangelist was given poisoned wine by the pagan Aristodemus, who had promised him that he would become Christian if the Apostle drank it and survived. Saint John drank it all without any damage. See Iacopo da Varazze [Jacobus de Voragine], *Legenda aurea*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (Florence: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 1998), 91–92. See also Ignaz von Zingerle, *Johannisseggen und Gertrudenminne. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie* (Vienna: aus der K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1862), 6; and Lutz Mackensen, “Johannisminne,” *Handwörterbuch des*

German literature.<sup>72</sup> Vernacular versions of this blessing are widely attested from the late Middle Ages onward and can be found in at least eleven manuscripts:

1. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. B IV 20, fol. 109r (fourteenth century)<sup>73</sup>
2. Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 85, p. 873–75 (fourteenth century)
3. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. germ. 366, fol. 158r–v (1378)<sup>74</sup>
4. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm. 6016 (olim Regensburg, Stadtbibliothek, Hs. Rat. civ. 218, fourteenth century)<sup>75</sup>
5. Vienna, Schottenkloster, cod. 313 (Hübl 336),<sup>76</sup> fol. 128r–130r (1453)
6. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 3070, fol. 1v (fifteenth century)

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*deutschen Aberglaubens*. Vol. 4: *Hieb- und stichfest – Knistern*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1932), col. 746–60. Saint John the Evangelist is also mentioned – along with Tobiah and Jacob – in the morning blessing from Cologne (German *Kölner Morgensegen*) transmitted in Hanover, Landesbibliothek, Ms. I 81, fol. 133r–134r (thirteenth century), in which the episode of Christ on the cross committing His mother to John (John 19: 26) is recalled. See Friedrich Wilhelm, *Denkmäler Deutscher Prosa des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts (Abteilung A: Text)*. Münchner Texte, 8 (Munich: Georg D. W. Callwey, 1914), 93 and 95 and, parallel to it, in the twelfth-century Sarnen, Bibliothek des Benediktinerkollegiums, Cod. membr. 69, fol. 94r (Wilhelm, *Denkmäler Deutscher Prosa*, 92 and 94).

**72** See, for example, Hartmann von Aue's *Erec*, where the protagonist, before facing the battle in the orchard, attends the Mass and drinks Saint John's blessing. Hartmann von Aue, *Erec*, ed. Manfred Günther Scholz. Bibliothek des Mittelalters. Texte und Übersetzungen, 5 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2004), 484: "einen trunc man im dar truoc / und tranc sant Johannes seggen" (They brought him a drink and he drank Saint John's blessing); or *Virginal. Goldemar*, ed. Elisabeth Lienert, Elisa Pontini, Katrin Schumacher. Vol. 2: *Wiener Virginal*. Texte und Studien zur mittelhochdeutschen Heldenepik, 10.2 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 493–94: "Man raicht in dar die schilde, / czwey sper nach ritterlicher art. / Auch Sant Johannes mynn und seggen / den fürsten da gegeben wart" (They gave him the shields, two spears according to the chivalric use; they gave also Saint John's love and blessing to the prince). Editor: This motif appears also many times in late medieval verse narratives, such as by Heinrich Kaufinger ("Die Suche nach dem glücklichen Ehepaar"); Albrecht Classen, *Love, Life, and Lust in Heinrich Kaufinger's Verse Narratives*. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 467 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), no. 8, 43–48.

**73** See also Gustav Meyer and Max Burckhardt, *Die mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Basel. Beschreibendes Verzeichnis. Abteilung B: Theologische Pergamenthandschriften*. Vol. 1: *Signaturen B I 1 – B VIII 10* (Basel: Verlag der Universitätsbibliothek, 1960), 373.

**74** The text of the blessing has been printed in Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts. Mit Berücksichtigung der deutschen kirchlichen Liederdichtung im weiteren Sinne und der lateinischen von Hilarius bis Georg Fabricius und Wolfgang Ammonius*. Vol. 2 (Leipzig: Druck und Verlag von B. G. Teubner, 1867), 337–38.

**75** The text of the blessing has been published in Konrad Hofmann, "Johannesminne," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 22 (1877): 242–45.

**76** Albert Hübl, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum qui in Bibliotheca Monasterii B.M.V. ad Scotos Vindobonae servantur* (Vienna and Leipzig: Braunmüller, 1899), 375–78.



7. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2817, fol. 23v–24v (1370/1390 ca.)
8. Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Cod. Oct. 145, fol. 234v–235r (after 1479/80)<sup>77</sup>
9. Schwabach, Kirchenbibliothek, Cod. 13, fol. 1r (end of the fourteenth century, in Low German)<sup>78</sup>
10. Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, Cod. C. 237, fol. 309r–311r; 321r (end of the fourteenth century, in Low German)
11. Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Cod. 1681 III, fol. 96va–97rb, 98ra–rb

These can be divided into two major categories, which are identified by Kesting as type  $\alpha$  and type  $\beta$ , the first of which can furtherly be divided into three different versions:  $\alpha$ I (further subdivided into  $\alpha$ I a: Einsiedeln, Cod. 85; Basel, Cod. B IV 20; and  $\alpha$ I b: Munich, Cgm. 6016; Vienna, Cod. 313; Vienna, Cod. 3070),  $\alpha$  II (Vienna, Cod. 2817; Weimar, Cod. Oct. 145) and  $\alpha$  III (Schwabach, Cod. 23; Uppsala, Cod. C. 237). Version  $\alpha$  III is Middle Low German, while the main difference between  $\alpha$  I and  $\alpha$  II is represented by the structure and, in particular, by the use of the word *Amen* to mark the end of each section ( $\alpha$  I) or of the whole text exclusively ( $\alpha$  II).<sup>79</sup> Type  $\beta$ , on the other hand, is constituted by the texts transmitted in Heidelberg, Cod. Pal. germ. 366 and Kraków, Cod. 1681 III.<sup>80</sup>

According to Kesting, type  $\alpha$  can be described as a ritual functional text, which did not belong to the liturgical praxis and, therefore, was not “holy” or immune from changes in the diction. For this reason, the manuscript versions of Saint John’s blessing should be regarded as more or less occasional written recordings of a much larger oral tradition, thus excluding the possibility of reconstructing the original version of the blessing,<sup>81</sup> which will, therefore, be discussed here on the basis of the existing diplomatic editions of single manuscripts. The

<sup>77</sup> The text has been published in Hoffmann, “Ueber ein oberdeutschen Johannessegen” (see note 56), 457–58.

<sup>78</sup> The text has been edited by Konrad Hofmann, “Johannesminne und deutsche Sprichwörter aus Handschriften der Schwabacher Kirchen-Bibliothek,” *Sitzungsberichte der königlichen bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München. Philosophisch-philologische Classe* 2 (1870), 15–38; here 16–19.

<sup>79</sup> Peter Kesting, “Johannisminne. Zur Edition und Deskription gereimter Gebrauchstexte,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie Sonderheft* 90 (1971): 232–48; here 233. See also Peter Kesting, “Johannisminne,” *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. Vol. 4: *Hil – Kob*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil, Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), col. 833–35.

<sup>80</sup> See also <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/22604> (last accessed on March 20, 2017).

<sup>81</sup> See also Kesting, “Johannisminne. Zur Edition” (see note 79), 235.

High German version  $\alpha I b$  is, for example, transmitted in Vienna, Schottenkloster, cod. 313, fol. 128r–130r<sup>82</sup>:

Hye hebt sich an der tewtsch segen vber sand Johannis  
 mýnn vnd ist gar gut.  
 Das ist sand Johanes mýnn,  
 Der vns got gunn,  
 Vnd sein mutter dye zart kuniginn.  
 Wer jr ymer enpeýs,  
 Den mach got salig vnd reich mit allem fleyss. Amen.  
 Das ist sand Johannis mynn.  
 Got verleich mir hewt sollich sinn,  
 Das ich sy hewt also gesegen,  
 Das vns got vnd der gut herr sand Johannis muz begegen. Amen. +  
 In welicher hant sach vnsere werich hewt erschein,  
 Da mus got vnd der gut sand Johannis pey vns sein. Amen. +  
 Sand Johannis mynne dy ist so gut.  
 Got vnd sein uil heyligs plut  
 Mûsz vnser zw allen zeytten wallten  
 Vnd vns in seiner huet behallten. Amen.  
 Durich sein hoch triualtikait  
 Vnd durich die marter dýe er laýt  
 An dem vron krewcz mit grosser arbaýt  
 Durich vns vnd alle dýe chrisstenhait. Amen.  
 Vnd durch all sein wunden rot  
 So helfff vns got vnd der heylig herr sant Johans aus aller vnser not. Amen. +  
 Das vns alle not vermeyde  
 Vnd das vns chain waffen verschneyd,  
 Das ye geschmitt ward,  
 Seýt das Crist geporen ward. Amen.  
 Vnd wo vns vnser veind vndert widergen,  
 Das wir jn sige müssen sten  
 Vnd das wir jn gesigen an,  
 Des hellff vns der gut man.  
 Jesus Christus aller mayst  
 Vater sun heyliger geýst. Amen. +  
 Dar zw gesegen vns got nachent vnd verr  
 Got alder werlt ein rechter herre.

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**82** The first half of the text is very similar in both version  $\alpha I a$  and  $\alpha I b$ , while the second part is constituted by a series of context-free invocations which can be moved freely. Nevertheless, some differences can also be found in the first part of the blessing, which appear to deal differently with the two thematic nuclei, around which the text is built: Christ's sufferance (and the hope to enjoy its fruits) and the request of protection against weapons, enemies and of victory. While, in fact, in version  $\alpha I b$  the two nuclei are presented one after the other, in  $\alpha I a$  they are intertwined. See also Kesting, "Johannisminne. Zur Edition" (see note 79), 242–43.

Got aller werlt ein schepher ist,  
 Der geb vns gelaytt craft vnd frýst. Amen.  
 Vnd wo vnser veind yndert pey vns seind,  
 Da misch sich got mit Worten enmitten jn. Amen. +  
 Dwrich der heylighen funff wort willen,  
 Dy der prýester spricht jn der stýll,  
 Darmid er got pringt jn sein hendt her ab  
 Gesegenten durich jn jn seiner huet vns hab. Amen. +  
 <S>eÿ aber yndert sand Johannes mynn pas gesegent dann die,  
 So chömm ene zw der alhie  
 Vnd zw ener dýe,  
 Also das sy payde wol gesegent sein  
 Als das prot vnd der wein,  
 Den got seinen jungern pot,  
 Da er fur vns wolt gen jn den tod. Amen. +  
 Sey aber jndert ein vaiger vnder vns allen,  
 So helff vns der heylig her sand Galle,  
 Das dem sand Johannes mynn enphalle. Amen.  
 Dem rat ich danne das er des tages nicht sol chomen aus,  
 Sunderleich sol er beleyben jn seines wirtes haws.  
 So gyb ich vns andern das zw puess,  
 Das vns ichtes geschaden muess  
 An sel an leyb an gut an ernn an vnsernn frewnden wo dýe pey vns sein,  
 Des hellff vns Maria vnd ir libes chindelein. Amen. +  
 Das vns das allen widervar  
 Des helff vns Maria dy Cristum gepar. Amen.  
 Nu heben wir awff vnd trinken all froleich.  
 Der almachtig got von hymelreich  
 Muezz vnser aller schyrmer sein  
 Mit Maria der hymlichen kuniginn. Amen. +  
 Des heyligen krewcz schilt sullen wir hewt füern,  
 Das sich vnser veint gegen vns vndert mügen geruren. Amen.  
 Amen sprech wir all gemain,  
 Wir varen wir reyten wir gen jn Christes hail. Amen. +  
 Amen das gelaub mir vnd dem guten sand Johann,  
 Das seiner mynn enpais chain vager man. Amen. +  
 Amen das daz also war sey,  
 Des hellff vns dye namen dreÿ  
 Dy heyligen kunig dreÿ + Caspar + Walthasar + Melchior,  
 Da mit wir varn wir reyten wir gen jn Jrem frid. Amen. +  
 Amen vnd jn dem namen der heyligen vier ewangelisten  
 Sand Lucas Sand Johannis Sand Marcus Sand Mathews  
 Muezzen vns sel vnd leib ere vnd guet mit ein ander frysten. Amen. +  
 Und in dem namen des vaters + vnd des Suns + vnd des heyligen geystes. Amen. +<sup>83</sup>

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83 Kesting, "Johannisminne. Zur Edition" (see note 79), 239–41.

[Here begins the German blessing on Saint John's love and it is very good. This is Saint John's love, which pleases God and his mother, the beloved queen. God will make happy and rich with every means whomever drinks it regularly. Amen. This is Saint John's love. May God grant me to be so blessed that God and the good lord Saint John must meet us. Amen. + Whatever we do today, may God and the good Saint John be with us. Amen. + Saint John's love which is so good. God and his very holy blood must govern us at any time and keep us under His protection. Amen. By His high Trinity and by the martyrdom, which he suffered on the holy Cross with great pain for us and for the whole Christianity. Amen. And by all His red wounds may God and the holy lord Saint John help us when we are in any difficult situation. Amen. + May any danger be spared to us and may no weapon ever forged since Christ was born<sup>84</sup> hurt us. Amen. And if our enemies confront us in some way, may we be victorious and defeat him, may the good man help us in this. Jesus Christ most of all, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. + For this, may God bless us near and far, God a just lord of all the world, God is a creator of all the world, may he give us protection and force. Amen. And if our enemies are with us, may God intervene with words. Amen. + By the holy Five Wounds, which the priest mentions quietly while he takes God in his hands, may he have us in His protection. Amen. + If Saint John's love has ever been better blessed than this, may it come to the one here and may both be as blessed as the bread and wine, which God gave to his disciples when he had to die for us. Amen. + But if there is a coward among us, may the holy Saint Gall help us so that Saint John's love falls from his hand. Amen. I suggest that he should not go out during the day, but remain by his host. In this way nothing will be able to hurt or damage the others of us, our soul, our body, our goods, our honor or the friends, who are with us. May Mary and her beloved Child help us in this. Amen. + Whatever happens to us, may Mary, who gave birth to Christ, help us. Amen. Let us lift the glass and drink all happily now. The omnipotent God in Heaven must be our protector together with Mary the heavenly queen. Amen. + Today we should carry the shield of the Holy Cross, so that our enemies can never move against us. Let us say 'Amen' all together, we travel, we ride, we walk in Christ's bliss. Amen. + Amen, may it be granted to me and to Saint John that no coward drinks his love. Amen. + Amen that may be true, may the three names of the Holy Three Kings + Caspar + Bathasaar + Mechior help us, so that we travel, ride and walk in their peace. Amen. + Amen and in the name of the Holy Four Evangelists, Saint Luke, Saint John, Saint Mark, Saint Matthew must save our soul, body, honor and goods. Amen, + And in the name of the Father + and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. +]

According to Kesting,<sup>85</sup> the absence of the segmentation highlighted by the repetition of the word *amen*, which is characteristic of version α II, has allowed a better aesthetic result. The same absence of segmentation can also be found in the Middle Low German (α III) version of the blessing, as it is transmitted in Schwabach, Kirchenbibliothek, Cod. 23, fol. 1r:

<sup>84</sup> The reference to all the weapons ever forged since Christ's birth can also be found in a series of generic protection blessings, such as the one transmitted on the last leaf of a fifteenth-century manuscript of the Gymnasialbibliothek in Halberstadt (Nr. 22). See also Holzmann, "*Ich beswer dich*" (see note 46), 267 and Benati, "*À la guerre*" (see note 32), 160.

<sup>85</sup> Kesting, "Johannisminne. Zur Edition" (see note 79), 244.

In den namen des vaders vnt des sones vnt des heylichen ghêstes, amen. Sunte Johannes,  
 sunte Matheus, sunte Lucas, sunte Marcus,  
 dy heylichen vîr êwangelisten,  
 dy mûten vns ghevristen  
 vor vnweder vnt vor wint,  
 vor alle sake dy vs scedeliken an lif vnd an sêlen sint.  
 des help vns de vader allermeyst,  
 dy sone vnt dy heylighe gheyst.

hîr sô seghene ik sunte Johannes mynne.  
 got vorlîge mi sulke sinne,  
 dat ich sy sô mûte seghenen,  
 dat vns got vnt dy gûde sunte Johannes mûte begheghenen  
 wor wir varen, rîden oder ghên,  
 lieghen, sitten oder steyn,  
 welker hande vns ghewerf sî,  
 dat got vnt dy gûde sunte Johannes by vns sy.

Sunte Johannes mynne dy ys sô gût,  
 got vnt syn heylighe blût,  
 dat mût ûser gewalden  
 vnt in syner hûte halden,  
 dat vs ênegher hande nôt vmmer betrûue  
 noch gheyne wâpene vns snyden,  
 dat hy ghesmedet wart  
 sint dat dy hylghe Crist geboren wart,  
 sunder ûse alleyne,  
 dat mûte steken sy snyden ghemeyne.  
 wen dat kumt út ûser hant,  
 sô sît tô den andren ghewant.

Noch sô seghene ik iu mêre:  
 got, al der werlt eyn hêre,  
 dorch syne hôghe drîualdicheyt,  
 dorch dy martele dy he amme crûce leyt,  
 dorch dy dyffen wnden rôt,  
 help ûs hêre út aller nôt.  
 ofte ûse viende irghen over rîden oder gheyn,  
 help ûs, hêre, dat wi en seghes mûthen irsteyn.  
 Sunte Johannes mynne heft sô dân craft,  
 dat sy eyn îslîk man tû seghehaft,  
 dat her van sînen vienden is behût.  
 got mischet sich dar inne vnt syn vil hîleghe blût.  
 dêr sô drinke wir inne,  
 dy aller besten mynne,  
 dy sunte Jurian drank  
 dy al syn nôt vorwant.

Wart sunte Johannes mynne hye  
 bat geseghent wen dye,  
 sô mûte ghene tû desser komen,

dat wy der beyder nemen vromen.  
 dy kome ûs tû trôste vnt tû heyle,  
 dat vns syn heylighe licham werde tû deyle.  
 dy drank dy mûte alsô wol gheseghent syn,  
 sô dat brôt vnt dy wîn,  
 dat got sinen inngheren gaf allen sam,  
 dat was sîn heylighe licham;  
 dy mûte vs tû trôste werden  
 êr wi scheyden van desser erden.  
 wy den drank drinket in deme seghene,  
 den mûten got vnt dy gûte sunte Johannes beiegenen  
 vnt mûten syn vredeschilt sîn,  
 sô mach he vor synen vienden behût syn.

Sunte Johannes mynne vntbeyt nye veyghe man,  
 dat rede ich sunder wân.  
 is hîr ymant veyghe vnder vns allen,  
 den mûte sunte Johannes mynne vntvallen,  
 dat wi dat met vnsen ôghen sên an,  
 sô råde ich em dan,  
 dat he nerghen vnghe,  
 vnt blîve in des hûs hê,  
 vnt teyle ym dat tû bûte,  
 dat im nycht scaden mûte.  
 des helpe vs dy gûte,  
 des heylighen Crist mûter

Nû hevet an gy vrôwen vnt gy man,  
 drinket vrôliken an.  
 wer sunte Jo. mynne vntbîte,  
 der werde sâlich vnt rîke  
 vnt dar tû sâlich  
 vnt alles scaden ânich.  
 sege vnt sâlde  
 vorlîge vs dy alde  
 vater allermeyst,  
 dy sone vnt ôch dy heyligh gheyst. amen.  
 gy scullen alle amen spreken,  
 dat vs der crechten leuen nicht vntbreke.  
 drink vnt du scalt vorbat gheven.  
 met gode mûte wy êwylichken leven. amen.  
 explicit amor sanct ...<sup>86</sup>

[In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen. Saint John, Saint Matthew, Saint Luke, Saint Mark, may the holy four Evangelists protect us from tempest and wind, from everything which is damaging both our bodies and our souls. May the Father,

86 Hofmann, “Johannesminne und deutsche Sprichwörter” (see note 78), 16–19.

the Son and the Holy Spirit help us in this. So I bless Saint John's love, may God grant me the senses to bless it so that God and the good Saint John may protect us wherever we travel, ride or walk, lie, sit or stand. Whatever our occupation is, may God and the good Saint John be with us. Saint John's love is so good, may God and His holy blood govern and protect us so that no tribulation can ever affect us and no weapon ever forged since Christ's birth can hurt us, while only our weapons may cut and pierce, unless they fall from our hand. In that case may they be as all others. I bless you once more: God, Lord of the whole world, by your high Trinity, by the martyrdom which you suffered on the Cross, by your five deep red wounds, help us now and in every difficult situation. If our enemies come against us both riding and on foot, help us, so that we can achieve a victory. Saint John's love has the power of making any person so blessed that he is protected against his enemies. God and his holy Blood are mixed in it, so that we drink the best love of all, which Saint Julian drank to overcome all his difficulties. If a love of Saint John's has ever been better blessed than that, may it come to the one here and may we get help from both of them. May the fact that His holy Body is divided be consolation and cure to us. May this drink be as well blessed as the bread and the wine, which God gave to his disciples and which was his holy Body. May it become our consolation before we leave this world. May whoever drinks in the blessing be always accompanied by God and Saint John, may they be his shield, so that he is protected against his enemies. No coward may consume Saint John's love, I say that for sure. If there is a coward among us, may Saint John's love fall from his hands so that we can see that with our eyes. Then I suggest that he does not go anywhere and that he remains at home. I tell him this as an admonition, so that he is not damaged. May the good and holy Mother of Christ help us in this. Let us drink happily now, both men and women. Whoever consumes Saint John's love will be blessed, rich and free from damage. May the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit bless us. Amen. You should all say 'amen', so that we do not lose our force. Drink and pass on. With good mood we live eternally. Amen. *explicit amor sanct ...*]

The Low German version of the *Johannisminne* can be divided into six thematic nuclei corresponding to 1. the introduction, in which the Four Evangelists and the Holy Trinity are invoked against wind and bad weather and Saint John is asked to be always with the petitioners; 2. the weapon blessing; 3. the invocation to Christ's Blood in order to overcome one's enemies; 4. the reference to the eventual existence of a stronger blessing; 5. the visually evident ostracism of coward people who might try to drink Saint John's wine and 6. the exhortation to drink the blessed wine, which will grant happiness and wealth on earth as well as the eternal life.<sup>87</sup> In this respect, the text does not differ much from the above-presented High German versions. Nevertheless, it shows some peculiarities which appear to be exclusive of the Low German branch of the tradition. These include, for example, the initial request for protection against severe weather conditions or the almost complete absence of references and invocations to the Virgin, who is mentioned only once toward the end, the exception for the petitioners' own

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87 See also Hofmann, "Johannesminne und deutsche Sprichwörter" (see note 78), 24–25.

weapons made in the weapon blessing<sup>88</sup> and the reference to Saint Julian the Hospitaller, patron of travelers and pilgrims.<sup>89</sup>

Heidelberg, Cod. Pal. germ. 366, fol. 158r–v transmits, as we said, a further version of Saint John's Blessing, which Kesting identifies – without further discussion or analysis – as type  $\beta$ <sup>90</sup> and which has been published by Wackernagel in his collection of German Church hymns.<sup>91</sup> This version, which is significantly longer and more redundant than the other ones, can be divided into twelve parts, whose end is systematically marked by the repetition of the word *amen* and whose beginning is often constituted by the refrain *Diz ist sant Johans mynne* (This is Saint John's love). Many of these stanzas take up the image of the wine, in which God's grace has to flow and "swim" in order to make it effective in protecting the petitioners from enemies and weapons and in granting them happiness and richness as well as eternal life. Other peculiarities of this text are the explicit identification of Saint John as the Evangelist, who was present at the Last Supper and who ate and drank the bread and wine which Christ gave him and the other Apostles, the reference to Christ's human nature, the use of cultivated biblical terms and phrases such as *sabaoth* and *alpha vnd o* and the mention of the seventy-two names of God.

If the large number of variants and of manuscripts transmitting Saint John's Blessing witnesses its popularity and diffusion in the German language area, other forms of journey blessings are definitely more rare. There is, for example, the case of a sixteenth-century formula preserved in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2999, fol. 413r, which is introduced by the title *Wan du wanderst* ("When you wander"):

'Jhesus gieng uber land, trueg ain guldeins kreycz in seiner handt, pegeget ym ain toder man, seine augen waren zue than, sein mund war im verstant, sein herz was im verpaid: Al mein veindt muessen verstant vnd verpaid, dy mich wolten trueben und in gros falschheit wolten meinen; des helf mir der man, der den todt an dem heyligen vron kreycz nam.' und sprich V Pater Noster und V Ave Maria und I Glauben.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup> A similar distinction between weapons which have to be innocuous and weapons which have to be effective can be found in the *Münchner Ausfahrtsegen* and in the above-mentioned fifteenth-century Low German weapon blessing preserved in Stockholm, Kungliga bibliotek, X 113, fol. 34v (see note 49).

<sup>89</sup> See also Hofmann, "Johannesminne und deutsche Sprichwörter" (see note 78), 22–23.

<sup>90</sup> Kesting, "Johannisminne. Zur Edition" (see note 79), 232–33.

<sup>91</sup> Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts. Mit Berücksichtigung der deutschen kirchlichen Liederdichtung im weiteren Sinne und der lateinischen von Hilarius bis Georg Fabricius und Wolfgang Ammonius*. Vol. 2 (Leipzig: Druck und Verlag von B. G. Teubner, 1867), 337–39.

<sup>92</sup> Anton Schönbach, "Eine Auslese altdeutscher Segensformeln," *Analecta graeciensia. Festschrift zur 42. Versammlung deutscher Philologen und Schulmänner in Wien 1893*, ed. Professoren



[‘Jesus went across the country, carried a golden cross in His hand. A dead man met him, his eyes were closed, his mouth was of stone, his heart was of bone. All my enemies become of stone and of bone, those who want to upset me and want to think falsely. May the man who died on the holy cross help me in this.’ And say five Pater Nosters and five Ave Marias and a Creed.]

The peculiarity of this blessing is represented by a short narrative describing the encounter between Christ and a dead man, which constitutes a quite uncommon form of “encounter charm” (German *Begegnungssegen*),<sup>93</sup> where Christ, instead of meeting someone in need and helping him, does not actually act. The motif of the encounter appears here to be merely functional to introducing and describing the dead man in those traits – closed eyes, stony mouth, and bony heart – which serve as an analogue for the effect desired: making the petitioner’s enemies harmless.<sup>94</sup>

If the above-discussed text does not show any specifically travel-related element apart from its title, a clear reference to riding and traveling on foot can be found in a short passage preceding the text of Tobiah’s Blessing in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm. 850, fol. 53r–v:

Wenne du uber felt reitest ader gangest, so thu den füß aufs dem stegraiff der wider das creücz ist und bete ain *pater noster* und ain ave maria und tû den füß denn wider in den staigraiff, so magestu nit von dem pferd vallen das dir wee geschee. desgleichen ist auch also so du gangest, so streck den füß gegen dem creücz

[When you ride or walk in the country, put the foot which is opposite to the cross on the stirrup and recite a Pater Noster and an Ave Maria and put the foot back into the stirrup. In this way you will not fall from the horse and get hurt. This is also effective if you walk, then stretch the foot toward the cross.]

In this case no formula has to be pronounced, but a ritual consisting of a gesture – putting the foot into the stirrup or stretching it – and of the oral recitation of canonical prayers has to be performed by travelers.

Apart from oral formulas, protection against, among others, the dangers of travel can be offered by written amulets, which have to be worn or carried. Many of these are described as “letters sent by Pope Leo to Charlemagne.” These texts can, therefore, be placed in the tradition of the “Heaven’s letters” (German

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der K. K. Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz (Graz: Verlagsbuchhandlung Styria, 1893), 24–50; here 46.  
**93** See also Ferdinand Ohrt, “Über Alter und Ursprung der Begegnungssegen,” *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* 35 (1936): 49–58.

**94** A dead man as analogue for innocuous enemies can also be found in the final part of a fifteenth century protection blessing preserved in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm. 850, fol. 61v. See also Benati, “À la guerre” (see note 32), 171–72.

*Himmelsbriefe*) and, in particular, in the “Holstein-type” of this genre,<sup>95</sup> which is characterized by the contamination from originally independent protection formulas, among which the so-called “Charlemagne Blessing.”<sup>96</sup>

In the High German language area the oldest representative of this kind of amulet is constituted by the text found on a now lost fragment once belonging to the Universitätsbibliothek in Munich (Fragm. 135). This slip of parchment, which could have really been used as amulet,<sup>97</sup> transmitted a Bavarian version of the letter to Charlemagne dating back to the end of the thirteenth century. Despite its fragmentary character (the parchment was cut on both the lower and the right margin and part of the text was lost) and the consequent problematic reading of some passages, this blessing already shows some of the recurring features of the genre, such as the repeated invocation to the Holy Cross, the use and contamination of biblical quotations (*quia me non vidisti et credidisti in me*, John 20: 29) and other Latin formulas (*Crux kristi sit mecum + Crux kristi est semper quem adoro*),<sup>98</sup> as well as the reference to the amulet’s effectiveness against dangers such as water, fire, weapons and difficult labor. Differently from other formulas of the same kind, the letter is referred to as *der brieff von babilon* “the letter of Babylon” and is ascribed to an angel and not to Pope Leo (*den der Engl kunig karl sand*).<sup>99</sup> The motif of Pope Leo’s fictional letter to Charlemagne is widely attested not only in amulets, but also in spoken protection formulas. An example of the

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<sup>95</sup> Rudolf Stübe, “Himmelsbrief,” *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Vol. 4: *Hieb- und stichfest – Knistern*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1932), col. 22–27; here 22.

<sup>96</sup> According to the legend this blessing was sent by God to Saint Colomanus for his father, the king of Iberia, who did not believe in its protective force and tested it on a criminal. Seeing that the man could not be hurt by swords, poison or fire, the king finally had the letter copied. One of these copies was then sent by Pope Leo to Charlemagne, who had its text painted in gold onto his shield. See also Rudolf Stübe, *Der Himmelsbrief. Ein Beitrag zur allgemeinen Religionsgeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1918), 9; Rudolf Stübe, “Karl-Segen (Kaiser),” *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Vol. 4: *Hieb- und stichfest – Knistern*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1932), col. 1007; August Closs, “Himmelsbrief,” *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*. Vol. 1, ed. Werner Hohlschmidt and Wolfgang Mohr (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2001), 656–58; Wolfgang Ernst, *Beschwörungen und Segen. Angewandte Psychotherapie im Mittelalter* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), 291–300.

<sup>97</sup> See also Paul Lehmann and Otto Glauning, *Mittelalterliche Handschriftenbruchstücke der Universitätsbibliothek und des Georgianum zu München* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1940), 137.

<sup>98</sup> The blessing *Crux Christi mecum, crux est quam semper adoro, / Crux mihi refugium, crux mihi certa salus* is attested as a distich from the eighth century onward. See also Ernst, *Beschwörungen und Segen* (see note 97), 291–92 and Bernhard Bischoff, “Ursprung und Geschichte eines Kreuzsegens,” *Volk und Volkstum: Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 1 (1936): 225–31.

<sup>99</sup> Lehmann and Glauning, *Mittelalterliche Handschriftenbruchstücke* (see note 98), 138.

latter case is found in a fourteenth-century High German prayer transmitted in Vienna, Hofbibliothek 2817, fol. 26a:

[...]

überwinden mit kainem waffen.

+ Gotes creucz sei min schirm.

Mit gotes creucz sol ich alweg gan und sicher varn.

+ Gotes creucz geb mir alles guot.

+ Gotes creucz nem us mir die weis des ewigen todes.

+ Gotes creucz hail mich N. und sei ewichlich by mir,

ob mir, under mir, vor mir, hinder mir und neben mir.

+ Ich empfilch hiut min sel und min lib in des hailigen gaistes segn,

+ und in den segn den all priester über gotes lichnam machent,

tuont und gebent: Der geruoch mines libes und miner sel all zit pflegen in gotes namen.

Amen.

Daz ist der brief den der babst Leo künig Karl sant: der ist dick und oft bewert. Wer den alle tag an sicht oder liset, dem mag des tages kain leid wider varn, noch mag mit kainem ysen verschnitten werden. Er mag auch in feur nit verbrinnen, noch in kainem wasser ertrinken, und wer in all tag by im tret, der verdirbet nimmer und muoz von tag ze tag uf gan an lib und an guot und an ern, und wer in by im hat an sinem ende, des sel kann nimmer verlorn werden. Amen.<sup>100</sup>

[... overcome with no weapon. + May God's Cross be my shield. With God's Cross I can go everywhere and travel safely. + May God's Cross give me averything good. + May God's Cross take out from me the seed of eternal death. + May God's Cross save me N. and be eternally with me, over me, under me, in front of me, behind me and beside me. + Today I commend my soul and my body to the blessing of the Holy Spirit + and to the blessing, which all priests pronounce on God's body: may they always take care of the reputation of my body and soul in the name of God, amen.

This ist he letter which Pope Leo sent to King Charles: it is dense and high regarded. Whoever sees or reads it everyday will suffer no pain during the day and no weapon will hurt him. He will not die in fire or drown in water and who carries it everyday with him will never be ruined and will increase day by day his life, his goods and his reputation. Who has it with him at the time of death cannot be damned. Amen.]

This text, whose beginning is missing, consists of two parts: the formula, a prayer to the Holy Cross, in which the petitioner invokes not only protection against weapons, but also safety of travel, good luck as well as eternal life and constant support, and the instructions for how to perform the ritual. These instructions, which begin by identifying the prayer above as the text of the letter sent by Pope Leo to Charlemagne, prescribe the reading of the formula every

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100 Holzmann, "Ich beswer dich (see note 46), 264.

day, in order to be, among other things, protected from any form of pain or risk and from any weapon.

A similar ritual is described in a fifteenth-century High German fragmentary text transmitted on a parchment leaf preserved in the Universitätsbibliothek in Innsbruck (Fragm. 36). In this case, however, the positive effect of the blessing can be achieved both by reading the letter and by listening to someone reading it on a daily basis.<sup>101</sup>

Moreover, in some formulas the letter appears to have a double function as both prayer and amulet as, for example, in two fifteenth-century manuscripts preserved, respectively, in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Cgm 850, fol. 62r)<sup>102</sup> and Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka (Cod. I D 8, fol. 157r).<sup>103</sup> In the former case, the list of the positive effects of the letter is preceded by an indication that they are guaranteed to those who read the formula, listen to it or carry it as an amulet, while according to the Wrocław manuscript those who listen to the formula everyday will be granted hundred days of indulgence and those who carry it as an amulet or who keep it at home will be protected against various kinds of danger.

No mention of an oral recitation of the formula is, on the other hand, made in the Middle Low German version of Pope Leo's letter preserved in Copenhagen, Kongelige bibliotek, GKS 3487 8<sup>vo</sup>, fol. 105a (end of the fifteenth/beginning of the sixteenth century), which is said to be effective in protecting those who bring it along with them against anything bad, weapons, thunder and lightning and fire, as well as helping women in labor and people in court:

Pawst leo sande desse segenynghe konyneck karlen, do he to kryghe scholde stoen. we dessen breff by syck heft, nene bose twngen mach en belegen, neen wapent mach en snyden, donre blixem mach en nichth scaden. In wylckem huß desse breff iß, mach neen vuer scaden. ock

**101** See also Holzmann, "*Ich beswer dich*" (see note 46), 264–65.

**102** See also Holzmann, "*Ich beswer dich*" (see note 46), 267; Anton Schönbach, "Segen," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 12 (1880): 65–82; and Benati, "*À la guerre*" (see note 32), 171.

**103** See also Klapper, "Das Gebet im Zauberglauben" (see note 66); Bernhard Schnell, "Himmelsbrief," *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. Vol. 4: *Hildegard von Bingen – Koburger, Heinrich*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Gundolf Keil, Werner Schröder, Burghart Wachinger, and Franz Josef Worstbrock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), col. 28–33. The same double function of the text is also hinted at in a fourteenth-century version of Charlemagne's letter transmitted in a Latin manuscript once belonging to the Benedictine Monastery of Weißenstephan and now preserved in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek under the signature Clm. 11601 (fol. 183va and 185va). On this, see Benati, "*À la guerre*" (see note 32), 172; and Ernst, *Beschwörungen und Segen* (see note 97), 293–94.

hylcke vroue by syck hefft wen se geyt to der bort, de entfanget vorlycke gaue van gode vnd heft gode leff.

Dus we by syck heft, wen he to reche geyt, mach dat recht nichth vorlesen, ock gut, effthe ere, wert he beholden by den luden. dyt iß de sulue segenynghe, men dat de worde vorwandert syn.<sup>104</sup>

[Pope Leo sent this blessing to King Charles when he had to face war. Whoever carries this letter will not be deceived by scandal mongers, hurt by weapons or damage by thunder and lightning. The houses in which this letter is kept will not be damaged by fire. Furthermore, the woman who carries it with her when she goes into labor will receive gifts from God and have a good life.

Those who carry it when going to court will never lose their cause, goods or honor and will be kept in good consideration by people. This is the same blessing, but the words are different.]

In some versions, such as the one transmitted in Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Hs. 5832 (fifteenth century),<sup>105</sup> the fictional letter to Charlemagne has been significantly expanded and combines other Christian motifs such as the Five Wounds of Christ, the Holy Three Nails or Mary's Virginity with the devotion of Jesus' Last Seven Words.<sup>106</sup>

This wide palette of protection blessings and amulets – many of which transmitted in more than one version and with more or less significant differences – aimed at, among others, diverting the dangers connected with travel clearly attests their popularity in medieval and early modern German society. Another element allowing us to understand how widespread the recourse to journey blessing and amulets was in the German language area is the high number of references to them which can be encountered in literary texts.<sup>107</sup>

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**104** Chiara Benati, "Charms and Blessings in the Middle Low German Medical Tradition," *Medieval German Tristan and Trojan War Stories: Interpretations, Interpolations, and Adaptations (Kalamazoo Papers 2015–2016)*, ed. Sibylle Jefferis. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 786 (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 2017), 115–44; here 131.

**105** See also Holzmann, "Ich beswer dich" (see note 47), 265–67; and Benati, "À la guerre" (see note 32), 172–74.

**106** The first attempt to number and group together Christ's utterances on the Cross we have knowledge of is Bede's Latin prayer *De septem verbis Christi in Cruce*. See *Venerabilis Bedæ Anglosaxonis presbyteri opera omnia ex tribus præcipuis editionibus inter se collatis*. Vol. 5, ed Jacques Paul Migne (Paris: Apud editorem, 1850), col. 561. See also Herbert Thurston, *The Devotion of the Three Hours' Agony on Good Friday. Translated from the Spanish Original of Father Alonso Mesia S. J.* (London: Sands & Co., 1899): 5; 41. Though not particularly frequent, the motif of Christ's last seven words is attested in other blessings and amulets. See, for example, Benati, "Charms and Blessings" (see note 105), 126.

**107** See note 72.

A very peculiar case of this literary reception of journey blessings is represented by a stanza (L 24, 18) from Walther von der Vogelweide's *Wiener Hofton*. Here, in fact, we do not simply have a reference to the habit of praying God before leaving or blessing those who are leaving, but a journey blessing which has entered into courtly lyric. Though artistically immeasurably superior, Walther's stanza fits perfectly into the tradition of journey and morning prayers,<sup>108</sup> as shown by its first line which echoes the introductory formula *ich bin hûte ûf gistandin* ("I got up this morning") already appearing in the above-mentioned twelfth-century manuscript from Muri (Sarnen, Bibliothek des Benediktinerkollegiums, Cod. membr. 69, fol. 94r)<sup>109</sup>:

Mit sælden müeze ich hiute ûf stên,  
 got hêrre, in dîner huote gên  
 und rîten swar ich in dem lande kêre.  
 krist hêrre, lâz an mir wêrden schîn  
 die grôzen kraft der gûete dîn  
 und pflig mîn wol dur dîner muoter êre,  
 als ir der heilig engel pflæge  
 und dîn, dô dû in der krippen læge  
 – junger mensch und alter got –,  
 dêmüetic vor dem esel und vôr dem rinde.  
 und doch mit sældenrîcher huote  
 pflâc dîn Gabriêl der guote  
 wol mit triuwen sunder spot.  
 als pflig ouch mîn, daz ân mir iht erwinde  
 daz dîn vil gôtelîch gebot.<sup>110</sup>

[“Blessed may I rise today,  
 Lord, in Your keeping go my way,  
 on foot, on horse, wherever in the land I wander.  
 Let the mighty power of Your Good  
 come to light in me, Christ, Lord,  
 and care for me, stand by me, for your mother's honor –  
 as the holy angel cared for her, your mother,  
 and You, as You lay in the manger,  
 man newborn, God in Eternity,

**108** See also Moser, “Vom Weingartner Reisesegen” (see note 7), 85.

**109** See also Holzmann, “*Ich beswer dich*” (see note 46), 269. See also the beginning of the still inedited weapon blessing transmitted in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 4542, fol. 80r (end of the fifteenth century): “Heut wil ich auffston / in gotz frid wil ich gon ...” (Today I want to get up and walk in God's peace ...). See Karin Schneider, *Die deutsche Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München. Die mittelalterlichen Handschriften aus Cgm 4001–5247* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996), 188.

**110** Walther von der Vogelweide, *Werke. Gesamtausgabe*. Vol. 1: *Spruchlyrik*, ed. Günther Schweikle. Universalbibliothek, 819 (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1994), 256.

lowly before the ass, before the ox so lowly,  
 and still dear Gabriel, alert in blessing,  
 cared for You, abided watching  
 with no distain, in loyalty –  
 just so, now care for me as well, that Your most holy  
 divine command not die in me.”<sup>111</sup>

Further echoes of the tradition are respresented by the use of the word *sælde* (“bliss”), which recalls a passage from Tobiah’s Blessing *sælec sî dir der lîp* (“may your life be blessed”); the invocation of God the Father and the Son (*got hêrre ... krist hêrre*); the phrase *in dîner huote gên* (“walk in your protection”) paralleling both the *Münchner Ausfahrtsegen* (*in des genâde will ich gân* “in his grace I want to walk”) and the blessing from Muri (*in die ginâde dis almehtin gotis gangin* “I have walked in the grace of the omnipotent God”) and the reference to the Virgin and to the condition of peace and grace at the moment of Jesus’ nativity.<sup>112</sup>

## The Scandinavian Tradition

Literary references to the habit of wishing a good and safe journey to those leaving can already be found in the *Poetic Edda*. In the fourth stanza of *Vafþrúðnismál* (“Vafþrúðnir’s sayings”), for example, Frigg repeats three times the wish that Odin, who – despite her advice – is going to seek out the hall of the giant Vafþrúðnir, may come back safe and sound:

‘Heill þú farir, heill þú aptr komir,  
 heill þú á sinnom sér!  
 æði þér dugi, hvars þú scalt, Aldaföðr,  
 orðom mæla jötun.’<sup>113</sup>

[‘Safe may you go, safe may you come back,  
 safe be the way you procede on!  
 Father of men, let your mind be keen  
 when you go and speak with the giant.’]

**111** Walther von der Vogelweide, *The Single-Stanza Lyrics*, ed. and transl. Frederick Goldin. Routledge Medieval Texts, 2 (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 99.

**112** See, for example, the late fifteenth century protection blessing against enemies recorded by Oswald von Zingerle, “Segen und Heilmittel aus einer Wolfsturner Handschrift des XV Jahrhunderts,” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* 1 (1891): 172–77 and 315–24; here 318. See also Benati, “À la guerre” (see note 32), 158.

**113** *Vafþrúðnismál*, ed. Tim William Machan. Durham Medieval Renaissance Texts, 1 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 2008), 59.

The wish for a safe and victorious expedition is also expressed by Högni's wife Kostbera in the thirty-second stanza of *Atlamál in grænlensko* ("The Greenlandic Lay of Atli"):

Bera kvað at orði,  
blíð í hug sínom:  
'Sigli þér sæler  
ok sigr árníð.  
Fari, sem ek fyrir mælik!  
Fæst eigi því níta!'  
  
["Kostbera spoke,  
lightened in her heart:  
'Sail with good fortune  
and win glory.  
May it go as I say!  
Let no one need to gainsay it!"]<sup>114</sup>

Moreover, the *Grógáldr* ("The spell of Gróa") is, for the largest part, a mother's blessing aimed at guaranteeing a good and safe journey to her son, as well as at protecting him against severe weather conditions and attacks from enemies:

'Löng er fjar, langir ro farvegjar,  
langir ro manna munir,  
ef þat verðr, at þú þinn vilia bíðr.  
ok skeikar þá skuld at sköpom.'  
'Gladra þú mér gal, þá er góðir ero:  
biarg þú, móðir, megil!  
á vegom allr hygg ek at ek verða muna:  
þikkiomk ek til ungr afi.'  
'[...]  
Dann gel ek þér annan: ef þú árna skalt  
vilja lauss á vegom,  
Urðar lokkor haldi þér öllum megom,  
ef þú á sinnom sér.  
Dann gel ek þér inn þriðja: ef þér þjóðáar  
falla at fjarlotom,  
Horn ok Ruðr snúiz til heliar heðan  
ok þverri æ fyr þér.  
Dann gel ek þér inn fjórða: ef þik fiáendr standa,  
görvir, á gálgsvegi,  
hugr þeim hverfi til handa þér  
ok snúiz þeim til sátta sefi.

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114 *The Poetic Edda*. Vol. 1: *Heroic Poems*, ed. Ursula Dronke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 83.



Dann gel ek þér inn fimta: ef þér fiqturr verðr  
 borinn at boglimom,  
 leysigaldr læt ek þér fyr legg of kveðinn,  
 ok stökk þá láss af limom  
 [en af fótom fiqturr.]  
 Dann gel ek þér inn sétta: ef þú á síó kómr,  
 meira, en menn viti,  
 lopt ok loqr gangi þér í lið saman  
 ok lé þér æ friðdriúgrar farar.  
 Dann gel ek þér inn síaunda: ef þik sœkia kómr  
 frost á fialli há,  
 hrævakulði megit þíno holdi fara,  
 ok haldiz æ lík at liðom.  
 Dann gel ek þér inn átta: ef þik úti nemr  
 nótt á niflvegi,  
 at því firr megi þér til meins gøra  
 kristin dauð kona.  
 Dann gel ek þér inn níunda: ef þú við inn naddgøfga  
 orðom skiptir iqtun,  
 máls ok manvits sé þér þa munni ok hiarta  
 gnóga of gefit.  
 Far þú nú æva, þar er forað þikkir,  
 ok standit þér mein fyr munom!  
 Á iarðfðstom steini stóð ek innan dura,  
 meðan ek þér galdra gól.  
 Móður orð ber þú, mōgr, heðan  
 ok lát þér í briósti búa!  
 iðgnóga heill skaltu of aldr hafa,  
 meðan þú mín orð mant.<sup>115</sup>

[‘Long is the journey, long are the roads, long last the yearnings of men, if it happens that your wish be granted, then Skuld’s decree is at fault. Sing for me magic spells, which are good, mother, help your son. I fear that I will perish on my way, even if I’m young.’]

‘[...] I sing you the second spell, in case you must travel roads against your will, then may Urd’s bonds hold you on all sides, while you are on the way. I sing you the third spell, in case mighty rivers threaten you with death, then may Horn and Rud<sup>116</sup> revert to Hel and ever dwindle for you. I sing you the fourth spell, in case of battle-ready foes meet you on the way to the gallows, may they change their minds, become friends with you and willing to make peace. I sing you the fifth spell, in case fetters will restrain your arms and

**115** *Edda. Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*. Vol. 1: *Text*, ed. Gustav Neckel (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1936), 298–301.

**116** These two names are also attested elsewhere and refer to the rivers, which are flowing into the Realm of Hel, the underworld of Norse mythology. See also *Die Edda. Götterdichtung, Spruchweisheit und Heldengesänge der Germanen*, trans. Felix Genzmer (Munich: Diederichs Verlag, 2011), 213.

legs: then shall a freeing charm be sung over your leg, and your limbs be liberated, your feet unfettered. I sing you the sixth spell, in case you must cross an ocean greater than men have known: then may the calm and the sea come together and grant you a peaceful journey. I sing you the seventh spell, in case you meet with frost on a high mountain: the may not the corpse-cold destroy your flesh, and may your body keep its limbs. I sing you the eighth spell, in case you are caught outside by night on a gloomy road: may you avoid being harmed by a Christian dead woman. I sing you the ninth spell, in case you must exchange words with the spear-noble giant: may you then be given, from the heart of Mímir, sufficient words and wit. May you never go where calamity awaits you, may no harm obstruct your desires. On an earth-fixed stone I stood within the doors, while chanting spells for you. May you carry with you your mother's words, my son, and let them dwell in your breast; for you will have abundant fortune throughout life, as long as you remember my words.']

Nevertheless, actual journey blessings and amulets are transmitted only much later. The sixteenth-century Icelandic *Galdrarbók* ("Book of magic") contains a few amulets aimed at protecting the person carrying them against a variety of dangers, some of which also connected with travel. The first one consists in a rather long list of names of God and other, sometimes misspelt, biblical names and liturgical phrases in Latin (or Greek):

Pesse bæn á ásier ad berast i allskins háskasemdum, vatz, siáfar og vopna, Ítem lesastz ádur maður sier móttodu menn sijna.

Iesus Christus Emanuel: pater et Domine. Deus meus Zebaoth, Adonaij, Unitas, Trinitas, Sapientja,: Via, Vita, manus, Homo, usiono, Caritas et terus, Creator, Redemptor, Suos, Finis, unigenitus, Fons, Spes, jmas, et tu Ergomanus, Splendor, Lux, Grammaton, Flos, Mundus, imasio, paracletus, Columba, Corona, prophetas, Humilas, Fortissimus, Atanatos, Kÿrias, Kÿrios, Kÿrieleison.

Jmas, Lux, tua, Grammaton, Caput, Alpha, et primo Genue, isus, Agnus, ovis, Vitulos, Serpens, Leo, Vermus, unus Spiritus Sancuts, Helio, Heloj, Lamasabactanj, Consummatum est, jncline capite, Spiritus, jesus vinset, jesus imperat, Redemptor, Deus Abraham, Deus jsaac, Deus jacob. +

Uriel, Tobiel, Gerealeel, Gabriel, Raphael, Michael, Cherubin, Cheraphin, Caspar, Fert miram, Meloiorus, Balthasar, Aurum, et trjva nomi, qvis Super pontavit, Solvetur, Avisibet, petate, Adam, Eva, jesus Nazarenus, Rex judiorum, jesus Christus Filj Dei, Miserere mej. +

Petrus, Andrias, jacobus, johannes, Philippus, Bartolomeus, Simon, judas, Matthias, Lucas, Paulus, Barnabas.

qvi me Defendit a Canibus, in manus Comentuum Spiritum meum, Redemisti meum Verita tue Amen.<sup>117</sup>

117 *En isländsk svartkonstbok från 1500-talet. Utgiven med översättning och kommentar*, ed. Nat. Lindqvist (Uppsala: Appelbergs Boktryckeri, 1921), 24.

[“This prayer ought to be worn on oneself in all kinds of dangers that threaten from water, sea, and weapons. It should also be read just before one sees one’s enemies: ...”]<sup>118</sup>

A name of God – *Tetragrammaton*<sup>119</sup> – is also present in the formula of another amulet from the same collection, which is introduced as effective in protecting against drowning, weapons and unpleasant death:

Huer sem þessi nofn ber a sijer þa ma hann eý i sio drukna og eý med uopnum illum æfast  
og eý mun hann illum dauda deygja og ey til skada verda:

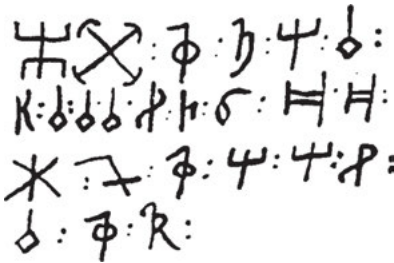
Helon Heloui Helion

Saa bonaij lux tetram Gramatus.<sup>120</sup>

[“Whoever carries this name on himself cannot be drowned in the sea, nor be struck by hostile weapons; nor will he die an unpleasant death, and neither come to harm ...”]<sup>121</sup>

Other amulets of the Icelandic collection do not contain any Christian element, but are constituted by a series of magical staves. See, for example, this one to be protected against all kinds of evil:

Ef mann uill fordast það sem illt er haf þessa stafi aa þijer þa maa þijer einginn granda ey  
suerd og einginn pina ey ormr nie eytur huorki i mat nie drick:<sup>122</sup>



[“If you wish to elude something that is evil, then carry these staves with you so that nothing can harm you, no sword and no plague; neither (will there be) any worm nor any poison in your food or drink.”]<sup>123</sup>

**118** Stephen Flowers, *The Galdrarbók. An Icelandic Grimoire* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1989), 59.

**119** See also Lecouteux, *Dictionnaire des Formules* (see note 48), 302.

**120** *En isländsk svartkonstbok* (see note 118), 32.

**121** Flowers, *The Galdrarbók* (see note 119), 63.

**122** *En isländsk svartkonstbok* (see note 118), 34.

**123** Flowers, *The Galdrarbók* (see note 119), 65.

More interesting for its resemblance to other traditions is another text included in the *Galdrarbók*, which goes under the title of *Brinniu bæn* (“Breastplate prayer”).<sup>124</sup> In this long text, which begins with an address to the Trinity, the petitioner begs for protection asking God to be breastplate and shield for both his soul and his body, inside and outside, for the five senses, for flesh and blood, veins and sinews, cartilage and bone and for all his body’s movements at any time. The catalogue of the dangerous situations, in which divine help is required, ranges from the monsters of the ocean to earthquakes, from creeping animals to magical poisons. Moreover, the final mention of “all the hostility of the enemy” (*allri sekt ouinarinz*) alludes to the Enemy par excellence – the Devil<sup>125</sup> – rather than to a human opponent. Another version of this prayer is preserved in the nineteenth-century manuscript Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, AM 960 4to and has been included in Ólafur Davidsson’s Icelandic folklore collection.<sup>126</sup>

The title and the armor metaphor, around which the whole text revolves, immediately suggest a connection with Irish *loricae*.<sup>127</sup> The use of the phrase *brynju bæn* to identify a prayer is not exclusive of the *Galdrarbók*, since the title appears three times in Jón Árnason’s classic collection of Icelandic folklore.<sup>128</sup> Nevertheless, these three texts are rather violent punishing incantations aimed at sending one’s enemy to the lowest pitch of Hell and describing in detail their terrible fate. For this reason, apart from the name, they have very little in common with both Irish *loricae* and other Germanic journey and protection prayers and blessings.<sup>129</sup>

More interesting is, in this respect, a long prayer transmitted integrally in Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, AM 426 12mo, fol. 19v–27r (seventeenth century) and partially also in Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, AM 696 XXVIII 4to, fol. 1r–2v (around 1500):

Eg befala mig í dag og hvern annan í vald föður og sonar og heilags anda.

Eg befala mig þeim heilaga líkama, sem hin skírasta mey og móðir, jómfrú María, huldi í sínum kviði, og offraður var til líknar og lausnar öllum syndugum mönnum.

<sup>124</sup> *En isländsk svartkonstbok* (see note 118), 36–40.

<sup>125</sup> In his Swedish translation of the text Linqvist in *En isländsk svartkonstbok* (see note 118), 41, correctly renders the word *ouinarin* as *djävulen* “the Devil.”

<sup>126</sup> *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur*, ed. Ólafur Davidsson. Vol. 1 (Akureyri, Iceland: Þorsteinn M. Jónsson, 1945), 347–50.

<sup>127</sup> See also Gearóid S. Mac Eoin, “Some Icelandic *Loricae*,” *Studia Hibernica* 3 (1963): 143–54.

<sup>128</sup> Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og ævintýri*. Vol. 1 (Reykjavík: Bókaútgáfan Þjóðsaga, 1954), 440–43.

<sup>129</sup> See also Mac Eoin, “Some Icelandic *Loricae*” (see note 128), 143–44.

Eg befala mig í vernd drottins vors Jesú Christí.

Eg befala mig því hinu dýrmæta blóði, sem af hans síðu rann og flaut.

[...]

Nú signi eg mig í nafni föður og sonar og heilags anda.

Nú signi mig faðir og sonur, svo að eg megi ganga í heilags anda friði.

Nú signi mig sá hinn sami Jesús Christus, sem á krossinum hékk, hver af Gyðingunum var spottaður og í sína ásjónu háðulega hræktur, með nöglum negldur, með spjóti lagður og aumlega særður.

Bevara þú mig, mína sál, mitt hold og blóð, æðar og sinar, brjósk og bein og allan minn samsettan líkama, frá öllu járn og stáli, byssum og bogum, sem smíðaðir hafa verið, síðan Jesús Christus var fæddur.

Eg deyfi og sljóvga öll vopn við það h[eilaga] hold og blóð drottins vors Jesú Christí, sem mér eða mínum nokkrum í minni ættkvísl til skaða og skammar eða nokkurra vondra hluta, hugsað eða talað [er] af nokkrum manni, minni eða meiri, svo að mínu holdi verði ekki' að meini.

Verndi mig svo guð faðir, sem þú verndaðir og geymdir þinn elskulegan son fyrir Heródis kóngs sendiboðum.

Bevara þú mig, drottinn minn guð, frá öllu því, sem mér kann til nokkurs skaða að vera, sem er fyrir vondu rygti og fordjörfun, fyrir morðingjum og manndrápurum, fyrir ... þjófum of skeytum fljúgandi um nætur.

Bevara þú mig fyrir eldi, himneskum og jarðneskum.

Bevara þú mig, drottinn minn, fyrir öllum illum hlutum á sjó og landi, sem öfluglega að mér koma, frá eldingum og reiðarþrumum, jarðskjálftum, hagli og óveðri.

Bevara þú mig, drottinn minn, frá falsi og flærð, fjölkynngi og göldrum.

Eg deyfi og sljóvga öll vopn allra manna, galdra og gjörninga, sem mér eru ætlaðir af nokkrum manni eður skepnu, við allar fimm undir vors drottins, Jesú Christí.

Stöðva þú, drottinn minn, alla þá, sem mér eða mínum vilja nokkuð vont gjöra, og heft þú þá þar í frá, svo sem þú stöðvaðir ána Jórdan, þá vor herra Jesús Christus var skírður af hinum h[eilaga] Jóhanni Baptista, hjálpari minn og guð minn.

Stöðva þú, drottinn minn, mig frá öllu vondu, svo sem þú stöðvaðir sjó og vatn fyrir þína lærisveina, og sem þú stöðvaðir Hafið rauða, svo still þú alla mína mótstöðumenn og banna þeim, drottinn minn, mér vont að gjöra, svo sem þú bannaðir óhreinum anda himnaríki.

Bevara þú mig nú, drottinn minn, frá allri illsku minna óvina, sýnilegra og ósýnilegra, svo sem þú leystir þrjá sveina úr ofninum, Daníelem úr ljónagröfinni og Davíð kóng af hendi Sáls og syndasaur.

Vernda þú mig, drottinn minn, fyrir þína bitru pínu og dauða. Gef þú mér mína lífsnæring, að eg fari svo með það, sem þú lánaðir mér, að þér sé þægilegt, en mér sjálfum nýtsamlegt og öllum mínum afkvæmum, alla vora lífdaga.

Hlíf mér, lausnari, lifandi guðsson, sem fyrir allt mannlegt kyn var krossfestur.

[...].<sup>130</sup>

[“I recommend myself today and every day to the power of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

I recommend myself to that holy body which the most pure maiden and mother, the Virgin Mary, hid in her womb and which was offered for the help and salvation of all sinful men.

(I recommend myself to the protection of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.)

I recommend myself to the precious blood which ran and flowed from His side.

[...]

Now I bless myself in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Now may the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost bless me, that I may walk in the peace of the Holy Spirit.

Now may the same Jesus Christ bless me, who hung on the cross, who was ridiculed by the Jews, and was mockingly spat upon in his face, nailed with nails, transfixed with a spear, and grievously wounded.

Protect me, my soul, my flesh and blood, veins and sinews, gristle and bone, and my whole body from all iron and steel, from all guns and bows which have been wrought since the birth of Jesus Christ.

I blunt and deaden all weapons with the holy body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and all that is thought or spoken by any man, high or low, for the purpose of injuring, disgracing, or otherwise harming me or my near relatives, so that it may not harm my flesh.

Protect me then, God Father, as you protected your beloved Son from messengers of Herod.

Protect me, my Lord God, from all that can harm me, from disrepute and ruin, from murders and killers, from thieves, and from arrows flying at night.

Protect me from fire, both heavenly and earthly.

Protect me, O Lord, from all bad things on sea and land which do violence to me, from lightning and angry thunder, earthquakes, hail, and bad weather.

Protect me, O Lord, from deceit and falseness, from spells and magic.

I deaden and blunt all weapons of all men, magic and evil deeds, which are directed against me by any man or animal through all the five wounds of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Hinder, O Lord, all those who wish to do evil to me or mine, and prevent them, as you halted the river Jordan when our Lord, Jesus Christ, was baptized by St John the Baptist, O my helper and my God.

Hinder me, O Lord, from all evil, as you stilled the sea and water for your disciples, and as you halted the Red Sea; prevent thus all my opponents and bar them from doing me evil, as you debarred the unclean spirit from the Kingdom of heaven.

Protect me, my Lord, from all the illwill of my enemies, visible and invisible, as you released the three youths from the furnace, Daniel from the lion's den, and King David from the hand of Saul and from the mire of sin.

Protect me, O Lord, for the sake of your bitter sufferings and death. Grant me nourishment, and that I treat all that you lend me in a manner pleasing to you and useful for myself and my children all the days of our lives.

Protect me, O Saviour, living Son of God, who was crucified for all mankind ..."]<sup>131</sup>

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131 Mac Eoin, "Some Icelandic Loricae" (see note 128), 147–50.

As in an Irish *lorica*,<sup>132</sup> the petitioner requests in a repetitive form help and protection in a series of situations ranging from natural calamities to the attacks – both physical and verbal – of enemies. In some cases, the invocation is reinforced by the reference to some biblical episodes, some of which are often mentioned in charms and blessings, e.g., Christ’s baptism in the Jordan, Jesus calming the storm, God parting the Red Sea, but also the Three Youths in the Furnace (Daniel 3), Daniel in the Lions’ Den (Daniel 6) and Saul’s attempts on David’s life (1 Samuel 19 and 20).

Formulas aimed at avoiding the dangers of travel are transmitted also outside Iceland. This is, for example, the case of a short text revolving around the motif of the following of Christ, which is transmitted in a series of late eighteenth-century manuscripts from the Northern part of Jutland, as to testify the vitality of this genre of blessings well after the end of the Middle Ages. In the appendix to the main text a prayer of exorcism against the devil is included:

Nu gaaer jeg ud og treder paa de Trin som vor Herre Christus paa traade, der han Helvede under traadte. I og mig skal intet skee enten med Svær eller noget Uskiel; det tager jeg til Nytte i Navnet G. F. G. S. G. H. Amen.

Appendix: Penus Kinus og Fomtus, Foldortus, Rummon, forsværger du tre Gange Djævelen, da Jesus var om den Tiid han gik ad Veyen, jed har intet at giöre med dig, Fanden.<sup>133</sup>

[Now I go out and walk on the very step which our Lord Christ took when he descended to Hell. You and I will have no difficulties and nothing will happen to us for the sake and in the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Appendix: Penus Kinus and Fomtus, Foldortus, Rummon, may you conjure three times the devil as Jesus did when he went to his passion. I do not have anything to do with you, devil!]

## Conclusion

As the wide corpus of English, German, and Scandinavian texts presented in this study has shown, parting from home and from the family constituted a reason of anxiety for both those leaving and those remaining home: the ones fearing the journey itself, the weather, the fortuitous attack of robbers or the deliberate ambush of a long-standing enemy, the others dreading the possibility of never seeing their beloved again, both devoured by uncertainty and nostalgia. As it still

<sup>132</sup> See also Mac Eoin, “Some Icelandic *Loricae*” (see note 128), 152–54.

<sup>133</sup> F. Ohrt, *Danmarks Trylleformler*. Vol. 1: *Indledning og Tekst* (Copenhagen and Oslo: Glydendalske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag, 1917), 351.

happens today, medieval and early modern people found a response to their fears in the divine and the supernatural. In this particular case, the double fear of travel and of abandonment gave rise to a specific genre of rituals aimed at obtaining protection during the journey and at ensuring oneself or a beloved person a safe comeback. The existence and the popularity of these rituals is, as we have seen, witnessed not only in actual prayers, blessings and amulets, but also in literary texts referring to them or revising them.

In some cases, the boundary between the written recording of actual, pragmatically determined formulas intended for use and pieces of poetry is far from being clear-cut, as my brief account of the critical debate on the Old English journey charm in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Ms. 41 should have demonstrated. In this context, however, marking this boundary is for the most part pleonastic and irrelevant: the medieval texts, which have – sometimes absolutely randomly – come down to us, are not only infinitesimal when compared with the whole oral and written production of the time, but they are also often fragmentary, anonymous and decontextualized. Therefore, we will never be able to fully understand the actual reasons and the logic behind the transcription and/or transformation of each single text, nor will we ever be able to exclude that the very piece that we are working on has been composed *ex novo* by the same scribe, whose handwriting we are trying to read. In this respect, it is by all means possible that, when writing down a journey blessing a poetically particularly talented scribe modified and restructured it with the insertion of a complex imagery and symbolism, thus somehow paralleling the creative path which led Walther von der Vogelweide to combine some of the traditional formulas of journey blessings to create a new work of art.

Nevertheless, that divine protection during travels and military expeditions must have been invoked in some way in real life and cannot have been a mere literary invention is ascertained on the basis of all those other blessings and amulets, whose content, geographical, and temporal distribution, as well as high number of versions clearly indicate a pragmatic rather than literary origin. Moreover, the analysis of this corpus of texts can give us a pretty close idea of the form of this invocation. Very often, in fact, specific journey blessings are inserted within the frame of broad “all-inclusive protection packages” covering the petitioner’s material and spiritual safety, thus sometimes transcending the single contingent journey and assuming a more universal meaning of commitment to God, though without necessarily excluding the possibility of having recourse to them in concrete travel or war situations. In some cases, however, formulas and rituals, such as the Old English remedy against travel fatigue inserted in *Bald’s Leechbook* or the ritual aimed at minimizing the risks connected with the fall from a horse pre-



served in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm. 850, have retained a purely contingently practical utility.

Generic protection formulas, on the other hand, usually include a weapon blessing aimed at making hostile ones blunt and ineffective – often described as “tender” and compared to the Virgin at the moment of Christ’s birth – and, in some cases, also at making one’s own as resistant and effective as possible, which suggests they originated in a warrior context and were thought primarily for military expeditions, but that, with time, they started being used also in other contexts. In favor of the hypothesis of a wartime origin of these blessings and amulets speak also both the bane of cowards included in Saint John’s Blessing and the constant reference to enemies, possibly at first exclusively the men on the other side of the battlefield and, later, also the opponents in front of a court or even the invisible ones and, ultimately, the greatest of fiends, the Devil. An evolution of this kind is, for example, reflected by the post-medieval tradition of Tobiah’s Blessing, which, in some German-speaking parts of Europe, continued to be printed and sold as an amulet until shortly before the Second World War, but radically changed not only its form (from a text intended for oral recitation to a written amulet to wear), but also its sphere of effectiveness becoming a pain reliever for women in labor and, more generally, an instrument to make life easier.

Along with the drinking the *Johannisminne*, this blessing certainly represents the most-widespread and long-lived departure ritual in the German language area. Both of them derive their names from a biblical episode (the story of Tobit sending his son to Media and blessing him before he leaves) or a legend (Saint John drinking poison and surviving) and both of them have come down to us in a great number of manuscripts and versions, whose interrelations certainly deserve further, in depth investigation (e.g., taking into considerations the relationship between the Low German versions of the blessings and their High German counterparts). Written amulets, particularly those belonging to the tradition of the fictional letter sent by Pope Leo to Charlemagne, were also quite popular in the German language area, where they are attested from the end of the thirteenth century onward (Munich, Universitätsbibliothek, Fragm. 135) along with spoken protection formulas having recourse to the same motif of the letter.

Carrying a written amulet against various kinds of dangers was a common practice in Iceland as well, as indicated by their insertion in the sixteenth-century *Galdrarbók*. However, while in the German and English tradition the content of these amulets was always Christian, in the Icelandic “Book of magic” Christian texts are side by side with others, where mysterious staves, possibly of pagan origin, are said to make those wearing them invulnerable to swords, plagues,

worms and poison. In this respect, despite their late attestation and the many changes that they could have undergone over the centuries, these few non-Christian amulets can be considered the only extant representatives of a tradition – that of wishing a safe journey to those leaving – which certainly antedated the Christianization of the Germanic peoples, as witnessed in literary texts and in particular by the passage of *Vafþrúðnismál*, in which this wish is significantly put into Frigg's mouth and addressed to Odin, the father of the Germanic gods.

Sally Abed

# Water Rituals and the Preservation of Identity in Ibn Fadlan's *Risala*

## Introduction and Current Research

In 922 C.E. (310 A.H.) Ahmad Ibn Fadlan, the Arab envoy of the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir to Almish, the Volga King of the Bulgars, composed an account of his northward journey known as *Risalat Ibn Fadlan*.<sup>1</sup> *Risala*, a term commonly translated as epistle, is a genre in Arabic literature which Naser Abdel Razek al-Muwafi defines in *al-Rihla fi al-Adab al 'Arabi* (The Journey in Arabic Literature) “as a piece of writing on a particular topic, whether individual or social, composed in a literary style that excites the feelings of the readers.”<sup>2</sup>

It is not likely that Ibn Fadlan called his account *Risala*. More likely, he called it a report. Difficult to classify at the time, it is probable that Ibn Fadlan's contemporaries considered it a *Risala* since it conforms to the salient features of the genre.<sup>3</sup>

The other term that Ibn Fadlan's contemporaries could have used, but did not, is *rihla* or journey. It derives from the root *r-h-l*: to move from place to place usually on land.<sup>4</sup> The twelfth-century jurist and theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazali defines the genre in his compendium *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Revival of

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1 Abu 'l-Fadl Ja'far ibn Ahmad al-Mu'tadid (895–932 C.E.), better known as al-Muqtadir bi-Allah, was the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad from 908 to 932. Almish flourished from the end of ninth century to the beginning of tenth. For more on Almish and his kingdom, see Richard N. Frye *Ibn Fadlan's Journey to Russia: A Tenth-Century Traveler from Baghdad to the Volga River* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2006), 9.

2 Naser Abdel Razek al-Muwafi, *al-Rihla fi al-Adab al 'Arabi* (The Journey in Arabic Literature) (Cairo: Cairo University Press, 1995), 265. This translation and all others from Arabic sources are my own.

3 al-Muwafi, *al-Rihla fi al-Adab al 'Arabi* (see note 3), 265.

4 al-Muwafi, *al-Rihla fi al-Adab al 'Arabi* (see note 3), 123.

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Religious Sciences) as “a kind of movement and mingling” whose “aim” is the “incentive.”<sup>5</sup> In the twentieth century, the definition is more nuanced as “an accomplishment or an individual act that entails crossing the barrier of distance and breaking the barrier between one place and another for a specific aim.”<sup>6</sup> The term *rihla* was quite uncommon in the early tenth century; therefore, scholars employed the more common term *risala*. As the genre became better established, Ibn Fadlan’s *Risala* was classified as a *rihla*. It shares the features of *rihla*, such as the use of dialogue more than fifteen times, the recurring use of verbs of movement in the past tense, like *serna*/walked, *rahalna*/traveled, *akamna*/stayed, *marama*/passed, *nazalna*/descended, and the fact that it is more literary than geographical.<sup>7</sup>

The *Risala* was widely acclaimed by scholars<sup>8</sup> and the cultural encounter between Ibn Fadlan and the tribes he meets on his way is described as objective by various critics, the most recent of whom is Nizar Hermes in his *The European Other*.<sup>9</sup> The scholarly approach to the *Risala* ranges from highlighting its ethnographic value to the faithful account it gives of the funeral scene in the land of the Rus, Ibn Fadlan’s keen observation of different customs, the marvels he witnesses, and his use of approximation to describe unfamiliar phenomena.<sup>10</sup> In my paper, I depart from former scholarship and take a new approach that focuses on Ibn Fadlan’s insistence on performing ablutions in the cold weather, the value he attaches to water rituals, and his discourse of cleanliness as a journey within a journey that he undertakes to preserve his identity in a foreign land.

5 al-Muwafi, *al-Rihla fi al-Adab al ‘Arabi* (see note 3), 24.

6 al-Muwafi, *al-Rihla fi al-Adab al ‘Arabi* (see note 3), 24.

7 al-Muwafi, *al-Rihla fi al-Adab al ‘Arabi* (see note 3), 266–67.

8 See, for example, Sami al-Dahhan, “Introduction,” *Risalat Ibn Fadlan*, ed. Sami al-Dahhan (Damascus: al-Majma’ al-‘Ilmi al-‘Arabi, 1959), 13–59; here 51 and 30; Thomas Noonan, “European Russia: c500–1050,” *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 487–513; here 488; James McKleithen, “Introduction,” “The Risālah of Ibn Fadlān: An Annotated Translation with Introduction,” Ph.D. diss. Indiana University, 1979, 3; James Montgomery, “Ibn Fādlan and the Rūsiyyah,” *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 3 (2000): 2–25; here 2; and Daniel Baker, *Explorers and Discoverers of the World Explorers and Discoverers of the World* (Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1993), 308.

9 Nizar Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture: Ninth–Twelfth Century AD*. The New Middle Ages Series (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

10 In addition to previous scholarship on Ibn Fadlan that tackles these issues, which I list in note 8, see also James Montgomery, “Spectral Armies, Snakes, and a Giant from Gog and Magog: Ibn Fadlan as Eyewitness Among the Volga Bulgars,” *The Medieval History Journal* 9 (2006): 63–87; and id., “Travelling Autopsies: Ibn Faḍlān and the Bulgār,” *Middle Eastern Literatures* 7 (2004): 3–32.

I argue that Ibn Fadlan's apparent obsession with washing rituals throughout his *rihla* is directly linked to identity preservation and the attempt to lend coherence to his *rihla* through preserving the ritual itself while abroad under very different cultural conditions. In that process, the ritual becomes a *rihla* (journey) within the broader context of Ibn Fadlan's own. The angle through which I am approaching Ibn Fadlan's discourse of cleanliness in the *Risala* is complementarity and world making that I explain in detail later. He makes, or perceives, the world according to his traditions, whether religious or cultural, as much as the other makes the world too, understandably according to different views. As he encounters differences, Ibn Fadlan applies complementary views of peoples and values that are largely inclusive. My new take on Ibn Fadlan's discourse of cleanliness in relation to identity therefore goes beyond the critique leveled at his description of filth that supposedly shows the "very primitive customs of this northern people," but "most important, it gives an idea of the superior attitude of the Moslems toward ... this group of still pagan Western Europeans."<sup>11</sup>

In the *Risala*, water rituals, complementarity, and world making are interrelated since they are an expression of Ibn Fadlan's identity and lead to its preservation, as well as the preservation of his world. Performing ablution allowed him to keep track of time as a Muslim by performing prayers and keeping the notion of time linear. It also allowed him to keep track of space by facing north while praying and knowing the directions. Maintaining both time and space throughout this diurnal journey of ablution and prayers is crucial to world making, as Ibn Fadlan travels from the known ecumene to the unknown and uncharted ecumene according to the Arab mapping traditions of the time. On his journey, Ibn Fadlan travels over lands that split due to the cold, frozen rivers, and comes in close proximity with Gog and Magog. These aspects give his *rihla* an apocalyptic dimension, which steers it away from the known world map and into the eschatological zone where time breaks down. However, Ibn Fadlan's insistence on ablutions and the five prayers keep time and space coherent while he is traveling through the foreign world. Throughout his journey, complementarity, which is part of his religious identity that derives from the Qur'an, became the strategic tool to deal with other tribes who had a different view of washing rituals and the value of water. It allowed the space for objectivity and occasional dialogue that embraces diverse identities and multiple ways of world making.

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11 Albert S. Cook, "Ibn Fadlan's Account of Scandinavian Merchants on the Volga in 922," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 22 (1923): 54–63. Also, mostly for western perspectives, see the contributions to *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: Explorations of Textual Presentations of Filth and Water*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 19 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

In the first section of the paper I examine the author, his text, and mission to provide a background for Ibn Fadlan's world that he attempted to preserve while traveling. In the second section, I explain the concepts of world making and complementarity that Ibn Fadlan used to express his identity and to deal with difference. The third section surveys the significance of water rituals and ablutions to the Arabs to gain a better understanding of the importance of these rituals to Ibn Fadlan and his culture. In the fourth section, I turn to the *Risala* to study Ibn Fadlan's view of water rituals along with the other tribes, namely the Oguz and the Rus, and the way in which he applied complementarity to negotiate difference. The fifth section underscores purification as a journey within the larger journey and its relationship to the Arab map of the world, before I conclude my article tying all the various parts back with an emphasis on identity preservation as expressed in Ibn Fadlan's narrative.

## The Author, the Text, and the Mission

We know very little about Ibn Fadlan's person. What we can glean from his own account is that he was in the service of al-Muqtadir (895–932 C.E./282–320 A.H.). His language in the *Risala* suggests he was well versed in Islamic sciences.<sup>12</sup> The account opens with a brief self-introductory exordium where he explains the reason for his journey:

This is the book of Ahmad ibn Fadlān al-'Abbās ibn Rāshid ibn Hammād, the client of Muhammad ibn Sulaymān, the envoy of the caliph Muqtadir to the king of the Saqāliba in which he tells of all he saw in the lands of the Turks, the Khazars, the Rūs, the Saqāliba, the Bāshghirds and others, their various customs, news of their kings and their current status.<sup>13</sup>

The embassy, he asserts, is a response to a letter having arrived from Almish ibn (Shilkī) Yiltawār, king of the Saqāliba, to the Abbasid Caliph. In the letter, Almish asks for “someone who could instruct him in the Faith [and] teach him the laws of Islam,” and help with building a “mosque ... so that he could have the prayers

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<sup>12</sup> Most of our information on Ibn Fadlan derives mainly from Yāqūt al-Hamawī's thirteenth-century *Mu'jam al-buldān* (Lexicon of Countries). On this point, see Abd al-Rahman Hmeida, *A'lām al-Jughrafeyin al-'Arab* (Masters of the Arab Geographers) (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1988), 199; Sami al-Dahhan, “Introduction” (see note 9), 28; and Shamsuddine al-Kilany, *Surat Uruba 'inda al-Arab fi-l-'Asr al-Wasit* (The Picture of Europe for the Arabs in the Middle Ages) (Damascus: Ministry of Culture, 2004), 195.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness: Arab Travelers in the Far North*, trans. with an intro. by Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone. Edition, 1 (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 3.

said in his name,” and “a fortress [to] be built, for defence against the [Khazar] kings who were his adversaries.”<sup>14</sup>

Ahmed Zeki Validi Togan and A. P. Kovalevsky, however, argue that the embassy was not a response to an invitation as much as it was a pre-emptive step on the part of the Abbasid caliph to consolidate his power and to earn political prestige and commercial gains along the northern routes and borders to other kingdoms.<sup>15</sup> The suggested motives of the caliph are in keeping with the Arabs' expansionary ambitions at the time. On the other end of the spectrum, Thomas Noonan, in “European Russia: c500–1050,” asserts that Almish's motives for approaching the caliph were, first, his desire to suppress the “tribal leaders” and “the ruling elite which included 500 prominent families,” and second, he needed help “against Khazar domination.”<sup>16</sup> The mission probably combines elements of all the above in addition to Ibn Fadlan's intentions, which center on the delegation dispatched by the caliph in answer to Almish's request, and the aim to provide an eyewitness account of the customs of various groups.

Specifically, Ibn Fadlan is charged with the responsibility of “reading the letter to the king, making over to him the gifts that had been sent him ... supervising the teachers and jurists,” along with delivering the desired amount of money.<sup>17</sup> The embassy was prepared by Nadir al-Harami who did not participate in the journey.<sup>18</sup> It is composed, as Ibn Fadlan says, of Ibn Sawsan al-Rassi, an ex-Russian slave Tekin al-Turki, a Muslim Turk, and Bares al-Saqlabi, the Slav, and in addition to Almish's envoy, 'Abd Allah ibn Bashtu al-Khazari (the Kazar) who journeys back home with the caliph's delegation.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, as Hermes notes, the embassy is “conversant with many of the languages spoken by different

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<sup>14</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 3.

<sup>15</sup> Marius Canard, “Introduction,” *La Relation du Voyage d'Ibn Fadlân Chez les Bulgares de la Volga*. Extrait des Annales de l'Institut d'Etudes Orientales, XVI (Algiers: Typo-Lith et Jules Carbonel, 1958), 41–48; here 46–47. As to the history of travel to the northern parts of Europe during the Middle Ages, see the contribution to the present volume by Albrecht Classen.

<sup>16</sup> Noonan, “European Russia: c500–1050” (see note 9), 504. The Khazars were a Jewish rival state that threatened the Bulgars and exhausted them with taxes. For more information, see the entire section in the same source, 487–513. There is a wide-ranging debate about the claim that the Khazars, or at least their elites, were Jewish, but this is not the place to discuss this here in detail.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 3.

<sup>18</sup> al-Kilani, *Surat Uruba 'inda al-Arab* (see note 13), 195; and, Hermes, *The [European] Other* (see note 10), 82.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 3–4; and, al-Dahhan, “Introduction” (see note 9), 69.

peoples they met *en route* to Volga Bulgharia.”<sup>20</sup> It reflects the diversity of the then mosaic-like culture of Baghdad whose members are adept in languages that facilitate conversation with each other, as well as the foreign other.

Given the certain identity of Ibn Fadlan, the status of the *Risala* is not complex. News of the embassy is known through the generous, though incomplete, excerpts of Yāqūt al-Hamawī (1179–1229) in his immense geographical dictionary, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Lexicon of Countries).<sup>21</sup> We know from Yāqūt that Ibn Fadlan returned to Baghdad, though the manuscript for the return journey did not survive.<sup>22</sup> The wide circulation of the *Risala* among medieval Arab audiences points to its integration and transmission in works prior to Yāqūt’s *Lexicon*. As the latter asserts, “the story of Ibn Fadlan and his dispatching by Al-Muqtadir to Bulgaria is a popular and well-known account among the people. I have seen many copies of it.”<sup>23</sup> Unattributed reproduction of the account has been noted in the geographic works by al-Masʿūdī (896–956 C.E./283–345 A.H.), al-Istakhri (ca. 850–957 C.E./235–346 A.H.), and Ibn Hawqal (d. 978?/367? A.H.).<sup>24</sup> In the sixteenth century, the geographer Amin Razi incorporates excerpts of the *Risala* in his study.<sup>25</sup> In *Journeys to the Other Shore*, Roxanne Euben notes that “the tradition of *tawaatur* (repetition with the same content), which has been used in the establishment of Islam’s religious canons, widely served in the authentication as well as dissemination of information through travel texts.”<sup>26</sup> This *tawaatur* or citational tradition rescues the *Risala* likewise from oblivion.

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20 Hermes, *The [European] Other* (see note 10), 83.

21 Yāqūt al-Hamawī (1179–1229 C.E./575–626 A.H.), a geographer/traveler, was the first to recognize the importance of the epistle and to incorporate it in his own work. For more on Yāqūt’s travels, and how he might have possibly acquired the *Risala*, see Lunde and Stone, “Notes on the Texts,” *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), xxxiv.

22 al-Dahhan, “Introduction” (see note 9), 38.

23 al-Dahhan, “Introduction” (see note 9), 42.

24 al-Dahhan, “Introduction” (see note 9), 41–43 and 54–56.

25 Amin Razi flourished from the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth. For more on Amin Razi, see H. M. Smyser, “Ibn Fadlan’s Account of the Rus with Some Commentary and Some Allusions to Beowulf.” *Franciplegius: Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honor of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr.*, ed. Jess B. Bessinger and Robert P. Creed (New York: New York University Press, 1965), 95–99, where Smyser reproduces Razi’s text and suggests that he might have been using an older manuscript, but the problem is that he is a “rationalizer.” It is hard to know where the text ends and where his rationalizing begins. Also, see Canard, “Introduction” (see note 16), 43.

26 Roxanne Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 74.



The study of Ibn Fadlan's *Risala* remained inextricably bound up with Yāqūt's text until the discovery of the Mashhad manuscript in the city of Mashhad in Iran in 1923 by Ahmed Zeki Validi Togan (1890–1970).<sup>27</sup> This manuscript dates from the eleventh century and contains a number of tenth-century travelogues, “including the two epistles of Abu Dulaf Mis‘ar ibn al-Muhalhil, the first half of the *Kitāb al-buldān* [the Book of Countries] of Ibn al-Faḡih, and an account of Ibn Fadlān's journey to Bulghār.”<sup>28</sup> Togan's discovery was a real breakthrough in the study of Ibn Fadlan. As Stone remarks, the Mashhad manuscript is “very similar, but not identical, to that preserved by Yāqūt. Some small differences in wording may be the result of editorial interventions by Yāqūt, but others are not so readily explained.”<sup>29</sup> In the same vein, al-Dahhan notes Yāqūt's heavy editing hand and critique of the *Risala* in some parts.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, the Mashhad text is incomplete; “it breaks off abruptly in the middle of a passage describing the Khazar khāqānate.”<sup>31</sup> Yāqūt made no use of the portion of the *Risala* that contains Ibn Fadlān's return journey, which eventually vanished. Most probably, “both the Mashhad manuscript and the text used by Yāqūt present abbreviated versions of a longer original.”<sup>32</sup>

In modern times, the *Risala* was published in Arabic twice, first by Ahmet Zaki Validi Togan (1890–1970) who accompanied his German translation with a photocopy of the Mashhad manuscript, and second in 1959 by Sami al-Dahhan, who thoroughly edited it. It was translated into several languages, such as Russian, French and English.<sup>33</sup> Later, the *Risala* was turned into a novel, a movie, and even a Syrian television series.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> For more on Togan and his discovery of the manuscript, see Lunde and Stone, “Notes on the Texts” (see note 14), xxxv–xxxvi; and, al-Dahhan, “Introduction” (see note 9), 47–48, on the status of the text and its discovery. See the same source for a chronology of the different Orientalists who studied the epistle, 44–49.

<sup>28</sup> al-Dahhan “Introduction” (see note 9), 47; and, Lunde and Stone, “Notes on the Texts” (see note 14), xxxiv.

<sup>29</sup> Lunde and Stone, “Notes on the Texts” (see note 14), xxxv.

<sup>30</sup> al-Dahhan “Introduction” (see note 9), 43.

<sup>31</sup> al-Dahhan, “Introduction” (see note 9), 48; and Lunde and Stone, “Notes on the Texts” (see note 14), xxxv.

<sup>32</sup> Lunde and Stone, “Notes on the Texts” (see note 14), xxxvi.

<sup>33</sup> al-Dahhan, “Introduction” (see note 9), 44 and 50.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Fadlan's account inspired Michael Crichton's first novel, *Eaters of the Dead* (1976), in which he extends Ibn Fadlan's journey to Scandinavia where the latter “witnessed Grendel's attack on the hall of Rothgar as recounted in the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*” (Lunde and Stone, “Introduction” (see note 14), xxxi. The 1999 American movie *The 13th Warrior* is based on this novel, where Ibn Fadlan is shown dreading the sea voyage and being derided by the Viking warriors, who claim that he is more used to the desert. Also, in Arab culture, the *Risala* was employed as a

Ibn Fadlan sets out for his journey from Baghdad – the hub of Muslim civilization during the tenth- and eleventh-centuries “only rivalled in wealth and size by Cordoba, the capital of Muslim Spain.”<sup>35</sup> It was common in the works of many geographers to present Baghdad as the omphalos of the world.<sup>36</sup> Underscoring the merits of a particular city in medieval Arab travel texts and maps is the counterpart of the “omphalos syndrome” typical of medieval Western travel texts and maps, where Jerusalem occupies a central position as in *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*.<sup>37</sup> The Abbasid Translation Movement, which saw the translation of the many Greek books available throughout the Eastern Byzantine Empire and the Near East into Arabic from the middle of the eighth century to the end of the tenth, consolidated Baghdad’s centrality.<sup>38</sup> A case in point of these linguistic skills and the ability to translate languages is Sallām al-Turjumān, the envoy of the caliph al-Wathīq (812–847 C.E./196–232 A.H.) to the land of Gog and Magog, who was adept in thirty languages.<sup>39</sup>

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response to the 2005 Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy in Denmark when it was turned into the Syrian television series, *Saqf al-‘Alam* (“Roof of The World”) (2007).

**35** Lunde and Stone, “Introduction” (see note 14), xiv. For more on Ibn Fadlan’s culture, see al-Dahhan “Introduction” (see note 9), 18–22. See also the contribution to this volume by Maha Baddar.

**36** Ibn Khurdādhīb’s *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik* generally maintains Baghdad as “a central hub from which long distance itineraries originate,” Zayde Antrim, *Routes and Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 102.

**37** J. B. Harley, “Maps, Knowledge and Power,” *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, ed. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 277–312; here 290. On some thirteenth-century, and later, maps Jerusalem was in the exact center. The three famous thirteenth-century maps, the Ebstorf, the Hereford, and the Psalter, are all Jerusalem-centered. See, for instance, Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae: Die Enden der Erde und der vierte Kontinent auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 36 (Hanover: Hahn, 1992); Brigitte Englisch, *Ordo Orbis Terrae: Die Weltsicht in den Mappaemundi des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*. Orbis mediaevalis. Vorstellungswelten des Mittelalters, 3 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002); cf. also the introduction to this volume by Albrecht Classen; and see also the contribution by Romedio Schmitz-Esser.

**38** For a thorough background on the translation movement, see the seminal study by Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: the Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ‘Abbāsīd Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th Centuries)* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998). Of the diversity of Baghdad, Gutas says, “Away from Byzantine influence in Damascus, there developed a new multicultural society in Baghdad based on the completely different demographic mix of population of ‘Iraq,” 19 and 17–20. On the role of the translation movement, see also Hermes, *The [European] Other* (see note 10), 13. As to Baghdad as a center of a Translation Movement, see the contribution to this volume by Maha Baddar.

**39** Al-Turjumān means the translator, from the word *tarjama* or translation. For a delightful account of his journey and the crossover between travel and translation, see Travis Zadeh, *Mapping*

Throughout the arduous Eurasian journey, Ibn Fadlan's embassy crossed present-day Iran, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tataristan, Bashkortan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, and most likely Scandinavia.<sup>40</sup> The caravan followed the old Khurāsān road that took them to Rayy and Nīshāpūr before they crossed the river Oxus to Bukhārā – the famous Silk Road city. They continued on their way to Khawarazm and Jurjāniya where they spent three months awaiting the spring thaw.<sup>41</sup> Later, they rode through Kazakhstan and came across the semi-nomadic Turkic tribes known as the Ghuzz (Oguz) Turks and a Pečeneg camp, probably near the Ural River. Soon afterwards, they reached the lands of the Bāshghird. A month later, the party finally arrived at their destination, the lands of the Bulgars or Bulghārs before it continued on to the land of the Rus.<sup>42</sup> The round trip took twenty-eight months in total, including a six months' stay in various places.<sup>43</sup> With this background in mind, I turn now to the notions of complementarity and world making that I use to approach the *Risala* and gain an insight into Ibn Fadlan's discursive tools as a traveler.

## Complementarity (*Takamul*) and World Making

Well-versed in religion, Ibn Fadlan used Qur'anic concepts throughout his journey, which promote upholding diversity within and without *dar al-Islam* (Muslim lands) as a source of *takamul* (complementarity).<sup>44</sup> Based on this notion of complementarity, he rejected the Greco-Roman climatic theory that ascribed particular traits to each race depending on the climate they enjoy, which some Arab scholars, such as al-Mas'ūdi (ca. 896–956 C.E./283–345 A.H.), al-Birūni (973–1048 C.E./362–440 A.H.), and Ibn Sa'ad al-Andalusi (1213–1286 C.E./610–685 A.H.), adopted. Unlike them, he refrained from reiterating the dominant

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*Frontiers Across Medieval Islam: Geography, Translation, and the 'Abbāsīd Empire* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, (2011).

<sup>40</sup> Hermes, *The [European] Other* (see note 10), 82.

<sup>41</sup> "The Khwārazmians were great merchants and travelers; Ibn Hawqal says they journeyed as far as the lands of Gog and Magog – that is, well into subarctic regions – in their search for fine furs" (Lunde and Stone, "Introduction" (see note 14), xx).

<sup>42</sup> Lunde and Stone, "Introduction" (see note 14), xx–xxi. For more details on the itinerary, see al-Dahhan "Introduction" (see note 8), 25–28; and Hermes, *The [European] Other* (see note 10), 82–84.

<sup>43</sup> al-Muwafi, *al-Rihla fī al-Adab al-'Arabi* (see note 3), 244.

<sup>44</sup> Shamsuddine al-Kilani, *Surat Uruba 'inda al-'Arab* (see note 13), 34–35.

cosmographical views entertained about the inhabitants of extreme regions.<sup>45</sup> Instead of climatic determinism, Ibn Fadlan applied the Qur'anic framework of *takamul* and followed the 'ulama's (religious scholars) opposition to "such profane considerations" that were diametrically opposed to the equal view of humanity expressed in the Qur'an, and exemplified by many verses, such as verse 49:13.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout the *Risala*, complementarity becomes conducive to the process of "worldmaking" which the traveler goes through. "Worldmaking" is a term that I borrow from Nelson Goodman's *Ways of Worldmaking*, who indicates thereby how "worlds ... may be built in many ways" and suggests that "the making" of a world involves a process of "remaking" it; this applies well to Ibn Fadlan's traveling experience.<sup>47</sup> The world Ibn Fadlan came from is tenth-century Baghdad, a cultural hub at the time that stood in stark contrast to the areas he traveled to in the North. Some of the apparent opposites were heat versus cold, running rivers versus frozen rivers, concrete land versus splitting earth, linear time versus disruptive time and Islamic or religious versus pagan rituals.

Ibn Fadlan's encounter with the cold, for example, and its freezing effect on his appearance and the deceptive topography during his three-month stay in Jurjaniya reveals the difficulty of maintaining washing rituals. In a sense, the cold emphasizes a world upside down that he delved into when away from home. There, Ibn Fadlan, "who could not hide his nostalgia for the warmth of the East, has movingly captured the hardships endured by the local inhabitants during

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<sup>45</sup> On climatic determinism, see Travis Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers* (see note 40). The notion that "the external, natural cosmos influenced the formation of ethnic, cultural, and geographical identities" drawing specifically from the Galenic division of the four humors and their effects on a person's character, matters significantly here. The Arab and Persian geographers "continued a long tradition of viewing the balance of temperature and moisture as a cause for the temperamental differences between peoples. These Galenic concepts entered directly into geography and cosmography through the writing of Ptolemy, who strongly influenced Arabic and Persian writers with his climatic division of the world. The extremities of heat and cold were viewed as natural factors that defined where civilization could take root. Accordingly, the severe temperatures in the farthest extremes of the north and south made these regions of the earth uninhabitable" (Zadeh, 85–86).

<sup>46</sup> Shamsuddine al-Kilani, *Surat Uruba 'inda al-'Arab* (see note 13), 95. In verse 49:13, God says, "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes, that you may learn about each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)."

<sup>47</sup> Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1978), 6. See also the introduction to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

this cold weather.”<sup>48</sup> He recounted a second-hand story of “two men [who] set out with twelve camels to load wood in the forest, but they forgot to take flint and tinder with them. They had to spend the night without a fire and in the morning their camels were dead from the terrible cold.”<sup>49</sup> Ibn Fadlan confirmed the story with his experiential knowledge:

I saw how the intense cold made itself felt in this country: the roads and markets were so empty that one could wander through most of them without seeing a soul .... Coming from the bathhouse, on returning to the house I looked at my beard. It was a block of ice, which I had to thaw in front of the fire. I slept in a house, inside which was another, inside which was a Turkish felt tent. I was wrapped in clothes and furs, but in spite of that my cheek froze to the pillow. I saw cisterns in that country lagged with sheepskins, so that they would not crack or burst, but it did no good. In truth, I saw the earth split and great crevasses form from the intense cold. I saw a great tree split in two from the same cause.<sup>50</sup>

The details in the testimony lend credibility to what he heard, and it is an instance of the principle of ‘*īyan* or eyewitness at work in Arab travel texts. The description underscores the dire circumstances anyone wishing to bathe had to put up with.

The core of Ibn Fadlan's description abounds with a series of inverted images. The empty roads and markets contrast strikingly with their busy counterpart in Baghdad. His frozen beard connotes that the cold is slowly creeping on him too and changing his appearance on his return from the bathhouse. Interestingly, though he is accustomed to traveling by land, here what he described is largely apocalyptic. It is not *terra firma*. Instead, it is as deceptive as the frozen road-like river in that it splits and great “crevasses form from the intense cold.” The land seems engulfing and threatening in Ibn Fadlan's eyes. Traveling overland is no longer a source of security and power. Rather than offer him temporary respite from the rivers, it seems to shatter around him, just as the tree splits in two.

Ibn Fadlan became more conversational as he acclimatized himself better. His few remarks on the people center on their cold-induced attitude: “In this country, when a man wishes to make a nice gesture to a friend and show his generosity, he says: ‘Come to my house where we can talk, for there is a good fire there.’”<sup>51</sup> He adds, “It is the rule among them that beggars do not wait at the door, but come into the house and sit for an hour by the fire to warm up.”<sup>52</sup>

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48 Hermes, *The [European] Other* (see note 10), 83.

49 Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 8–9.

50 Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 9. For a discussion of winter in western medieval literature, see Albrecht Classen, “Winter as a Phenomenon in Medieval Literature: A Transgression of the Traditional Chronotopos?,” *Mediaevistik* 24 (2011): 125–50.

51 Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 8.

52 Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 8.

The Qur'anic framework of complementarity among the different peoples mentioned above structures Ibn Fadlan's description of the inhabitants' customs. The significance of the aforementioned episode is two-fold. First, he refrained from reiterating the dominant cosmographical views entertained about the inhabitants of extreme regions. As such, he avoided the idea of the common barbarity associated with extreme climates that was held by the tenth-century polymaths al-Birūnī and al-Mas'ūdī. Second, his praise of the inhabitants' hospitality indicates a moment of developing intimacy and complementarity between cultures, where the feeling of otherness seeps into familiarity, namely that of shared hospitality and generosity customary to both Ibn Fadlan and his audience. Such attitude conforms to the dominant Muslim view, which regards diversity within and without *dar al-Islam* as a source of *takamul* (complementarity).<sup>53</sup>

As we shall see, Ibn Fadlan's use of the tool of complementarity, or *takamul*, becomes obvious in the land of the Oguz Turks and the land of the Rus within the context of water rituals. Complementarity becomes a helpful strategy to explain the other's rationale behind seemingly incomprehensible actions and to negotiate differences rather than engage in a blind critique of the other's washing rituals. Therefore, a short survey of the significance of water rituals in Arab culture reveals the full extent of Ibn Fadlan's emphasis on these rituals and is necessary to understand ablutions as a journey within a journey.

## Water and Washing in Islamic Culture and in the *Risala*

Culturally water comes up in the *Risala* numerous times and in this process illustrates Ibn Fadlan's recurring attention to washing rituals. His noted anxiety about the disruptive role of the unruly and frozen rivers on his way carries over to issues of cleanliness and performing ablutions. Ibn Fadlan held water sacred in his *Risala*. In the lands of the Oguz Turks, Ibn Fadlan observed their hygiene and sanitary customs asserting that they cared little about water, especially in winter: "They do not wash after polluting themselves with excrement and urine. They do not wash after major ritual pollution [*janāba*], or any other pollution. They have no contact with water, especially in winter."<sup>54</sup> Refraining from washing after the actions mentioned specifically contrasts with the obligation to wash

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<sup>53</sup> al-Kilany, *Surat Uruba Inda al-'Arab* (see note 13), 34–35.

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 12.

after performing the same actions in Islam. Ibn Fadlan repeated himself almost verbatim when he later described the uncleanness of the Rūs.<sup>55</sup> In view of this, Hermes suggests that his “condemnation of Viking [and Oguz] hygiene and his exaggeration concerning their filthiness ... [is] a projection of his religion’s conception of perfect hygiene and the importance of flowing water.”<sup>56</sup> Apparently, Ibn Fadlan considers water sacred, because washing after these acts renders a Muslim *taher* (pure or clean), and ready to pray.

A brief examination of the integration of washing and bathing in Islamic thought and how the ritual shapes Islamic culture and architecture helps explain the manner in which the ritual conditioned Ibn Fadlan’s way of thinking and expectations in a foreign land, where frozen water replaces the running water of Baghdad. The Qur’an (5:6) mandates ablution (*wudu’*) before prayer and other religious acts. It also instructs Muslims on how to perform the ritual properly. Such purification (*tahara*), as Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom rightly note in their introduction to *Rivers of Paradise: Water in Islamic Art and Culture*, is “one of the five acts that together with worship, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage comprise the bases of Islam according to religious law, and its importance has consequently generated an enormous discussion ranging from Prophetic Traditions to legal treatises and controversies concerning the tiniest details.”<sup>57</sup>

In addition to the religious and legal aspects, ablution had a visible architectural and aesthetic effect because mosques and other religious buildings were always equipped with pools and fountains to provide the necessary water for ablution. Religious debates sometimes went as far as discussing whether the delivery of water for ablution “could be used from a pool or had to flow from a tap.”<sup>58</sup> The significance of the ritual shows in the way ablution facilities “assumed a variety of different forms depending on prevailing opinion as well as the size and importance of the setting.”<sup>59</sup> Some mosques, particularly in the Ottoman areas, “have linear fountains built into the exterior walls of the mosque, while other structures have large open pools in the courtyard, sometimes uncovered and sometimes surmounted by a pavilion.”<sup>60</sup>

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55 Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 46.

56 Nizar Hermes, *The [European] Other* (see note 10), 96.

57 Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, “Introduction,” *Rivers of Paradise: Water in Islamic Art and Culture*, ed. Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 1–26; here 18.

58 Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, “Introduction,” *Rivers of Paradise* (see note 58), 18.

59 Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, “Introduction,” *Rivers of Paradise* (see note 58), 18.

60 Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, “Introduction,” *Rivers of Paradise* (see note 58), 18. See the entire introduction for a helpful overview of water in Islamic art and culture. On Ottoman architecture and water, see Walter Denny, “Art, Infrastructure, and Devotion: Ottoman Water Architecture,” *Rivers of Paradise*, 185–212.

Likewise, bathing became a hallmark of Islamic culture, also necessary for removing impurity, especially after sexual intercourse among other activities – as noted above by Ibn Fadlan. It had a visible architectural effect on all Muslim domains as elaborate steam baths (Arabic *hammam*) sprung up in public, as well as private, spheres like palaces. “Archaeological remains show that it was already important in early Islamic times, and it has remained so throughout the centuries.”<sup>61</sup> Ibn Fadlan’s medieval Baghdad, for example, is said to have had “at least 150 baths, Cairo 80, and Aleppo 70, while Istanbul had 151 according to one seventeenth-century source.”<sup>62</sup> The bath and the ablution areas were often built “as an annex of the mosque, with the income from the former used to provide upkeep for the latter, or as part of a charitable foundation.”<sup>63</sup>

For someone like Ibn Fadlan who came from a culture where bathing and ablution had acquired such a high degree of prominence and whose religious beliefs derived from “the Tradition of the Prophet reported by al-Nawawi according to which “Purity is half the faith,”<sup>64</sup> his attention to the ritual is understandable. In addition to the religious and spatial comfort zone which ablutions represent, the metanarrative behind Ibn Fadlan’s religiously oriented view of water, I propose, has to do with the desire to maintain temporal, spatial, and eschatological order even in the foreign land. Such desire is fulfilled through his spiritual journey of praying. As much as the abundance of rivers in the account delays the *rihla*, lack of washing hinders another kind of journey – this time a spiritual one.

It is worth noting that the importance of water predates Islam. While in Islam it took the form of purification, in pre-Islamic times and cultures water sometimes took the form of hydromancy, which is what Ibn Fadlan found the Oguz tribe practicing. It was also used as a site of burial as Ibn Fadlan found in the sea burial rites practiced by the Rus. In *Food Culture and Health in Pre-Modern Muslim Societies*, David Waines suggests that hydromancy was part of Babylonian

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61 Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, “Introduction,” *Rivers of Paradise* (see note 58), 19.

62 Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, “Introduction,” *Rivers of Paradise* (see note 58), 19. Another important eye-witness of Muslim hygiene practices, discussed from the Christian perspective, was Georgius of Hungary. He was a fifteenth-century slave in Turkey who observed and recorded with amazement the bathing culture in Turkey. See Albrecht Classen, “Life Writing as a Slave in Turkish Hands: Georgius of Hungary’s Reflections about His Existence in the Turkish World,” *Neohelicon* (2012): 55–72.

63 Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, “Introduction,” *Rivers of Paradise* (see note 58), 19. For more on the importance of water in Islamic culture, see in the same volume, Caroline Hillenbrand, “Gardens Beneath which Rivers Flow: The Significance of Water in Classical Islamic Culture,” 27–58.

64 Caroline Hillenbrand, “Gardens Beneath which Rivers Flow: The Significance of Water in Classical Islamic Culture” (see note 64), 35.



divination, while “the lack of perennial water courses in Arabia and the infrequency of springs prevented the development of such divinatory techniques as these amongst the Arabs.”<sup>65</sup> At any rate, Islam denounced those magical practices, which might explain Ibn Fadlan's surprise at the practice by the Oguz.<sup>66</sup> When it comes to burial rites, the Arabs buried their dead in land rather than in water, as I will explain shortly. With this, I turn to the text to examine the different ways of interpreting water and its value for Ibn Fadlan on the one hand, and the Oguz and the Rus on the other hand.

## Water: Washing and Burial Rituals

In the land of the Oguz Turks, Ibn Fadlan complained that “None of the merchants, or indeed any Muslim, can perform his ablutions in [the] presence [of the Oguz] after a major pollution; it must be done at night where they cannot see him, otherwise they become angry and say: ‘This man wants to put a spell on us – he is practising hydromancy.’ And then they fine him.”<sup>67</sup> The taboo on washing is irritating for Ibn Fadlan, who needs to perform ablution (washing) before he prays. The incident sheds light on several issues. In the absence of (clean) water, Muslims have the license to perform *tayammum* (an act of dry ablution using a purified sand or dust, which may be performed in place of ritual washing). The cold that caused Ibn Fadlan's beard to freeze and the difficulty of washing among the Oguz qualify for this license. However, Ibn Fadlan neither mentioned nor drew on this license mentioned explicitly in the Qur'an. His insistence on washing at night underscores an almost illogical obsession with maintaining his rituals in a foreign place. Yet this insistence contrasts with different cultural norms that are not his own, namely the fear of hydromancy. The fear of the Oguz indicates their possible belief in the power resting in water.

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<sup>65</sup> David Waines, *Food Culture and Health in Pre-Modern Muslim Societies* (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2010), 30–31.

<sup>66</sup> For more on the relationship between magic and Islam, see Emilie Savage-Smith, *Science, Tools and Magic*. The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, vol.12, parts 1 and 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Emilie Savage-Smith, *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, ed. Emilie Savage-Smith. *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, 42 (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); as to magic, see now the contributions to *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time: The Occult in Pre-Modern Sciences, Medicine, Literature, Religion, and Astrology*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 20 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

<sup>67</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 14.

On the other hand, for reasons unexplained by Ibn Fadlan, the practice of hydromancy made sense to the Oguz Turks. Their fear of hydromancy might have stemmed from their assumption that those who practice the magical ritual could invoke the power of water to harm them. However, for Ibn Fadlan, the difficulty of washing was particularly inconvenient since it disrupted his daily spiritual journey made up of the five prayers that conform to the five times of the day: dawn, noon, midday, sunset, and night. The charge of hydromancy is an instance of epistemic and cultural boundaries. As much as crossing the river to the land of the Oguz facilitated mediation, it signaled an inverted opposite in terms of understanding cultural norms and the world at large. Ibn Fadlan's way of overcoming the epistemic boundary was to perform the ritual out of sight of the public. This way, he was able to preserve his cultural and religious identity, maintain the spiritual journey that in turn gave the impression of the continuity of the actual physical journey, and also apply the concept of *takamul* that verse 49:13 preaches as it urges people to get to know each other and embrace the differences among various tribes and peoples.<sup>68</sup>

The same tool of *takamul* is seen at work when Ibn Fadlan traveled to the land of the Rus. The circulating assumption at the time was that *bilād el rus* (the land of the Rus) was a place where people ventured to but never returned. Writing in the tenth century, Ibn Hawqal claimed that the Rus kill strangers and they descend in water to trade, allowing no one to accompany them.<sup>69</sup> Ibn Fadlan's account is unique since he came, he saw, and he returned to tell. The first time he set eyes on the Rus he said, "I saw the Rus, who had come for trade and had encamped by the river Itil. I have never seen bodies more perfect than theirs. They were like palm trees. They are fair and ruddy."<sup>70</sup> Caroline Stone rightly noted that his description of the Rus "is one of the few that treats them as traders rather than bloodthirsty raiders."<sup>71</sup> He presented them as a mercantile community engaged in transactions and amassing fortunes as evidenced by the number of torques women wore round their necks.<sup>72</sup>

As in the land of the Oguz, Ibn Fadlan turned his attention to water rituals on two occasions: washing and burial rites. In the first instance, Ibn Fadlan

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<sup>68</sup> See note 47.

<sup>69</sup> al-Dahhan "Introduction" (see note 9), 40.

<sup>70</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 45. On the possible origin of the Rūs, see Montgomery "Ibn Fadlan and the Russiyah" (see note 9) 2–25; here 23. On the different groups and their origins, see Frye, *Ibn Fadlan's Journey to Russia* (see note 2), 81–130. For a comprehensive discussion of the subject, see Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

<sup>71</sup> Caroline Stone, "Ibn Fadlan and the Midnight Sun," *Saudi Aramco* (1979): 1–3; here, 3.

<sup>72</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 46.

remarked on their habit of circulating the same water basin amongst themselves for washing.<sup>73</sup> The underlying concern for this habit here, I would argue, is that this ultimately filthy water was unlike the running water necessary for performing ablutions. Its stillness, along with the infrequent washing of the Rus, contrasted with Ibn Fadlan's diurnal process of washing and praying. The impurity of the still water threatened to disrupt Ibn Fadlan's ritual of washing in pure and running water, if forced to participate in the unwholesome practice. In this context, Ibn Fadlan's daily washing could have appeared excessive, if not an anomaly to both the Oguz and Rus, who did not wash as frequently.

In addition to the last two incidents, of hydromancy and circulating the same basin, water comes up a third time in the land of the Rus as Ibn Fadlan watched their burial rites. Just as Ibn Fadlan held water sacred while performing ablutions, the Rus held it scared while performing their burial rites. The spiritual journey of Ibn Fadlan that included water rituals had its counterpart in the sacred journey to the afterlife that water burial suggests. Upon hearing of the ship burial tradition among the Rus, Ibn Fadlan expressed his wish "to have certain knowledge of this" which he did when "one day [he] learns of the death of one of their great men."<sup>74</sup>

He went to the place where the boat was first anchored by the river, and then rested on a wooden construction on the appointed day of cremation. The congregation came forward pronouncing unintelligible words. He then described the "witch" or angel of death responsible for killing the slave girl, the laying of the well-vested dead man in the boat along with fruit and drink, and sacrificial animals. Before her death, Ibn Fadlan recorded that the slave girl had sexual intercourse with the friends of the dead man, glimpsed at the green paradise above the frame of a door, was made intoxicated by the angel of death and taken to the boat. The crowd outside banged on their shields to muffle the girl's cries while being stabbed. Afterwards, they set fire to the boat and at the place where it was drawn out of the river, a round hill was built amid which is set a wooden pole that bore the name of the deceased.<sup>75</sup>

Contrary to the customary Islamic burial rites where the deceased was interred in land, the cremation scene appeared diametrically opposite. Ibn Fadlan's captivating account formed the basis for subsequent travelers who

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<sup>73</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 47.

<sup>74</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 49.

<sup>75</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 51–54. In "Ibn Fadlan and the *Russiyyah*," Montgomery quotes Dolukhanov's explaining "Ibn Fadlan's account shows the Rus as combining two aspects of funerary ritual (boat grave and cremation)" (see note 9) 2–25; here 13.

incorporated the *Risala* in their work, such as Ibn Hawqal and al-Mas'udi. Both similarly mentioned the burning of the dead and their *jawari* (slave girls).<sup>76</sup> In the Western tradition, Wulfstan of Hedeby's ninth-century account of his sea voyage from Hedeby to the trading center of Trusco depicted the cremation of wealthy people in Estland.<sup>77</sup> Although his account was a precursor to Ibn Fadlan's, it is not as detailed. He described the incident in few lines and focused mainly on the bequeathal of the deceased man's inheritance among the men with the swiftest horses in the country.

The ship burial custom Ibn Fadlan described was not a stable religious practice among the Nordics. It underwent modification, "depending ... on whether the deceased and/or ship was cremated and buried, or simply buried."<sup>78</sup> Literary texts refer "to even a further variation: the launching of the boat unmanned to drift upon the sea, sometimes aflame."<sup>79</sup> Oblivious to the complexity of the practice and its variations, Ibn Fadlan recorded the last variation. His account is, nevertheless, accurate in depicting the manner "pagans [in Scandinavia] of status and wealth availed themselves of elaborate boat burials."<sup>80</sup>

This tradition had its roots in eastern Sweden, "but best known today for the remarkable royal ship burials of Oseberg and Gokstad in southern Norway."<sup>81</sup> The Sutton Hoo burial of East Anglia, England, demonstrates that this form of burial was practiced by the Anglo-Saxons too and "could appeal to even the non-Scandinavian noble."<sup>82</sup> The custom lasted from the seventh through twelfth centuries and was loosely intertwined with Christianity, as it spread among the

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<sup>76</sup> al-Dahnan, "Introduction" (see note 9), 34.

<sup>77</sup> Wulfstan of Hedeby was a traveler and a trader whose short account was incorporated along with the ninth-century account of Ohthere of Hålogaland's in Alfred the Great's (871–899) translation of Paulus Orosius's fifth-century Latin work *Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII*.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas DuBois, "Visitors from Beyond: Death, Afterlife, and the Problem of Ghosts," id., *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 69–93; here 71. Also, for a more comprehensive treatment of corpses throughout the entire European Middle Ages, see Romedio Schmitz-Esser, *Der Leichnam im Mittelalter. Einbalsamierung, Verbrennung und die kulturelle Konstruktion des toten Körpers*. Sec. ed. *Mittelalter-Forschungen*, 48 (2014; Ostfildern: Thorbecke 2016).

<sup>79</sup> Thomas DuBois, "Visitors from Beyond" (see note 79), 69–93; here 71.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas DuBois, "Visitors from Beyond" (see note 79), 69–93; here 73.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas DuBois, "Visitors from Beyond" (see note 79), 69–93; here 73.

<sup>82</sup> Thomas DuBois, "Visitors from Beyond" (see note 79), 69–93; here 73. For a good introduction to the archeology of burial in the early Middle Ages, see *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, ed. Sam Lucy and Andrew Reynolds (London: Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2002). See also Martin Carver, "Ship Burial in Early Britain: Ancient Custom or Political Signal?" *The Ship as Symbol in Prehistoric and Medieval Scandinavia*. ed. Ole Crumlin-Pedersen and B. Munch Thye (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 1995), 111–24.

Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxons.<sup>83</sup> It is possible to see “the boat as a symbol of a journey to the otherworld,” especially that “the ferry to the otherworld is a widespread motif in world mythology.”<sup>84</sup>

The sacredness of water and the cultural difference in burial rites between Ibn Fadlan and the Rus was recorded by Ibn Fadlan as he recounted the brief exchange between himself and one of the Rus after the fire had consumed the ship. The dialogue points to the different burial rites in both cultures and encapsulates another complementary way of world making.

[One of the Rūs was standing beside me] and I heard him speak to my interpreter. I asked the latter [what he had said.] He replied: “You Arabs are fools!” [“Why is that?” I asked him.] He said: “Because you put the men you love most, [and the most noble among you,] into the earth, and the earth and the worms and insects eat them. But we burn them [on water] in an instant, so that at once and without delay they enter Paradise.”<sup>85</sup>

The man's critique of Arab burial rites shows that land burial was incomprehensible for the Rus as much as water burial was incomprehensible for the Arabs. However, Ibn Fadlan's integration of the dialogue in his account created the space for an equally valid counter narrative on burial rites. The rationale that the Rus man gave Ibn Fadlan for the practice attenuates the strangeness of the rituals and underscores a certain logic. The man's assertion that ship burial guarantees speedy access into Paradise reveals the value of water as a sacred medium that leads to Paradise and protects the dead from worms and insects. The man's explanation evokes Ibn Fadlan's later remark on the hidden tombs of the king of the Khazars: “Beneath this house there is a river ... that flows rapidly, which they divert over the tomb. They say: ‘This is so that no devil or man, or maggot, or reptile can reach it.’”<sup>86</sup>

Obviously, the Rus' and Khazars' burial rites represented a world upside down for Ibn Fadlan where all aspects are inverted. Notably, water here too is a protective boundary and has powers that recall the power the Oguz attributed to it as evident in their fear of hydromancy. In all those incidents, water has a particularly different value. In addition to purification, ablution has the added value of keeping track of space and time as Ibn Fadlan traveled and mapped the world, as I show in the next section.

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<sup>83</sup> Stacy Klein and William Schipper, “Navigating the Anglo-Saxon Seas,” *The Maritime World of the Anglo-Saxons*, ed. Stacy Klein and William Schipper. Essays in Anglo-Saxon Studies, 5 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Publications, 2014), 1–21; here 6.

<sup>84</sup> Thomas DuBois, “Visitors from Beyond” (see note 79), 69–93; here 74.

<sup>85</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 54.

<sup>86</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 56.

## Washing Rituals, Time, Space, and the Eschatological Map

The encounter with different washing rituals is significantly bound to world making in terms of time, space, and the eschatological map. Temporally, the short days of winter in the North posed a problem for Ibn Fadlan, for it was difficult to fit the five stipulated prayer times maintaining order. Time collapsed in the kingdom of Almish where a tailor from Baghdad told Ibn Fadlan that “a month earlier, he had not slept at night, for fear of missing the dawn prayer. For if a pot is put on the fire at sunset, ‘there is no time for the water to boil before the dawn prayer.’”<sup>87</sup> Spatially, Ibn Fadlan saw “the earth split and great crevasses form from the intense cold,” as mentioned above.<sup>88</sup> The insistence on maintaining washing rituals for the five prayers is thus tantamount to the attempt to control the lapsing time, prolong it through spacing out the five prayers, and make it linear.

When it comes to the eschatological map where time and space condense, Ibn Fadlan’s claimed proximity to the land of Gog and Magog in Almish’s kingdom, exemplified by seeing the supposed corpse of one of the apocalyptic race literally made him veer off the known map of the ecumene back then. The incident gains prominence for us since it represents the sacred geography and the apocalyptic vision inherent in religious exegesis. It overlaps with medieval Arabic maps that always depicted the barrier to the land of Gog and Magog in the extreme north, thus representing for medieval thought “the frontiers of knowledge, a semiotic ‘No more beyond’ (*non plus ultra*), which ... demarcates the limitations of human capacity.”<sup>89</sup> In this respect, Ibn Fadlan reached a point in the *rihla* where he was almost falling off the known world map.

In Islamic thought, the northern lands held “a particular fascination for Muslims, for they played a crucial role in Islamic eschatology. This contrasts with the little or non-existing fascination that the East largely held for Western Christians. The Arab geographers placed the lands north of the Caucasus in the Sixth and Seventh Climes” beyond which “lay the Land of Darkness, a mysterious, mist-shrouded land, inhabited by the tribes of Gog and Magog.”<sup>90</sup> These tribes trapped by the barrier that *Dhu al-Qarnayn* (he with the two horns), a military figure empowered by God, built, represented the most brutal savages on the earth

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<sup>87</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 32.

<sup>88</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 9.

<sup>89</sup> Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers Across Medieval Islam* (see note 40), 6.

<sup>90</sup> Lunde and Stone, “Introduction,” (see note 14), xvii.

believed to wreak havoc on the Day of Judgment.<sup>91</sup> The severity of the climate renders the lands beyond them uninhabitable.

By the time Sallām al-Turjumān undertook his journey to the barrier, “early Arabic geographical tradition had already established that the lands of Gog and Magog lie beyond the Khazar, situated between the sixth and seventh climes, stretching across the farthest edge of the inhabited world.”<sup>92</sup> Al-Khwārazmī, for example, in *Surat al-Ard* “locates the city of Magog in the seventh clime, and the interior city of Gog, which lies beyond the seven clime, in the far northeast, above the arctic circle.”<sup>93</sup> Geographically speaking, geographers mapped Gog and Magog in the northernmost regions of the earth as shown on al-Kashgari’s eleventh-century map.

The tradition continued in subsequent maps, such as Ibn Hawqal’s in the eleventh century. On these maps, the figures of Gog and Magog are not depicted, but the barrier is, usually in the form of an arctic circle that includes the phrase “the land of Gog and Magog.” Zadeh remarks that in the latter’s account, the people of Gog and Magog are hairless, and they only “trade with merchants after plucking out all the hair from the merchants’ beards.”<sup>94</sup> He further notes that this detail “resonates with Ibn Fadlan’s astonishment at the beardless Turks (Oguz) he encountered on his journey who plucked all the hair off their faces, and suggests that the merchant tales of Gog and Magog that reached Ibn Hawqal were based on the identification of these savages with Turkish nomads.”<sup>95</sup> Also, “such a process of transposition seems to be the basis of the account by the Persian scholar Shahmardān b. Abi T-Khayr (fl. 476 C.E./1083 A.H.), who described how “merchants ... were able to make contact with the monstrous races.”<sup>96</sup>

The story of Gog and Magog is iterated in the *Risala*: one day the locals in Almiş’s kingdom found a giant swimming in the Itil. The king had the giant captured and detained. When he found out from the people of Wisu that the giant belonged to the apocalyptic races of Gog and Magog, he had him hanged from a tree. The king

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<sup>91</sup> It is of note that, “in the course of the early Arab conquests, the figure of Dhu al-Qarnayn was positioned, at least metaphorically, as a source of emulation for military expansion,” Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers Across Medieval Islam* (see note 40), 98. The story of Dhu al-Qarnayn is in Quran (18:92–98). In Islamic thought, there was sometimes a conflation, as well as confusion between Dhu al-Qarnayn and Alexander the Great, who is ascribed similar adventures in the Alexander romance. On that, see Faustina Clara Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus: A Survey of the Alexander Tradition through Seven Centuries: from Pseudo-Callisthenes to Šūrī*, trans. Ania Lentz-Michaelis (Paris and Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010).

<sup>92</sup> Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers Across Medieval Islam* (see note 40), 94.

<sup>93</sup> Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers Across Medieval Islam* (see note 40), 237.

<sup>94</sup> Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers Across Medieval Islam* (see note 40), 145.

<sup>95</sup> Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers Across Medieval Islam* (see note 40), 145.

<sup>96</sup> Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers Across Medieval Islam* (see note 40), 145.

described the race to Ibn Fadlan as “naked,” enclosed behind a barrier formed by the sea, and that they feed on a God-sent fish out of which they cut off sufficient pieces to eat. If they eat more than they need, they could die.<sup>97</sup> Ibn Fadlan did not miss the opportunity to see the corpse. Under a tree, he said, there was the giant’s head “like a beehive,” his ribs “like the stalk of a date cluster and the bones of his legs and arms were enormous too. I was astonished at the sight. Then I went away.”<sup>98</sup>

Almish’s strategy to inspire fear in Ibn Fadlan through displaying the corpse, probably of a mammoth, was part of a “psychological warfare,” as James Montgomery suggests.<sup>99</sup> His aim was to pressure the latter to deliver the designated money from the caliph, which he thought Ibn Fadlan was hiding, but that was never delivered.<sup>100</sup> The desire to instill wonder and fear into Arab ambassadors from foreign kingdoms reoccurs in other texts, such as the *rihla* of ‘Imara Ibn Hamza, the envoy of al-Mansur to the king of the Rum, who inspired fear in the former by displaying marvels, such as two ferocious lions, two swinging swords, and a red cloud followed by a green.<sup>101</sup>

Therefore, the normative laws of everyday reality, especially of time and space, break down. Deceptive topographies ranging from the splitting of the earth and frozen rivers, to red-dyed landscapes culminate in the notion of time that ultimately breaks down leading to Gog and Magog. In such conditions, Ibn Fadlan’s insistence on ablutions and prayers is tantamount to an organized diurnal journey that had the ability to preserve his world, identity and narrative from the chaotic world he experienced. In Islamic thought, maintaining prayers helps the person keep track of time and spatial directions since the person has to face Mecca in the north. In a sense, prayers functioned as Ibn Fadlan’s compass throughout his journey.

## Conclusion

Throughout, Ibn Fadlan noted differences between “us” and “them” in terms of customs and traditions as he journeyed among different tribes. The tool of complementarity predicated on knowing other tribes and peoples made Ibn Fadlan

<sup>97</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 40–41.

<sup>98</sup> Ibn Fadlan, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 41.

<sup>99</sup> James Montgomery, “Travelling Autopsies: Ibn Faḍlān and the Bulghār” (see note 11), 12.

<sup>100</sup> Ibn Fadlan said that Fadl Ibn Musa, the Christian, Ibn al-Furat’s agent, “used a trick to deal with Ahmad Ibn Musa” who had the money and jailed him to steal the amount. *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness* (see note 14), 5 and 6.

<sup>101</sup> For more information on the *rihla* of ‘Imara Ibn Hamza, see al-Kilany, *Surat Uruba Inda al-‘Arab fi-l-‘Asr al-Wasīṭ* (see note 13), 185.



note the differences in customs and traditions among the various groups and himself too. Complementarity allowed him to humanize the other, to explain its customs and traditions whenever possible, and to incorporate short dialogues on various matters throughout his *rihla*, such as the one between him and the Rus man on funerary rites.

One major difference between Ibn Fadlan, the Oguz, and the Rus consisted of the cultural value of water that each group attached to it. The Oguz, for example, did not wash regularly. However, they regarded water as powerful after all, which is evidenced by their fear of hydromancy. Likewise, the Rus were not keen on washing regularly. Yet they held water sacred and valuable in their burial rites as they viewed it as a safe medium to dispose of their dead. In both cases, water and funerary rituals are a projection of the Oguz and Rus identity and their perception of the world.

Ibn Fadlan, too, viewed water as sacred and as a source of power, but in a different and more complex way. Water for him meant purification and performing ablutions despite the severe cold. Ablutions kept the five prayers running regularly throughout the five stages of the day. The diurnal journey of ablutions and prayers held time linear, oriented space, and prevented Ibn Fadlan from veering off the known world map into the totally eschatological dimension of Gog and Magog. But most important, the spiritual journey helped him preserve his own identity in a strange land and maintain his world picture. As such, his ablutions were a journey within the larger context of his *rihla* and certainly kept it going.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> For relevant perspectives on this issue in western literature, see Albrecht Classen, *Water in Medieval Literature: An Ecocritical Reading*. Ecocritical Theory and Practice (Lanham, MD, Boulder, CO, New York, and London: Lexington Books, 2017).

Nurit Golan

## Mapping the Road to Knowledge: The Mosaic Floor of Otranto Cathedral, Apulia, Italy (1163–1165)

The 740 m<sup>2</sup> mosaic floor of Otranto Cathedral in southern Italy features three huge trees along the nave and side aisles<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 1). Entering from the west the worshipper walks along the trunks, whose fascinating “fruits” hang from the branches<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 2).

The foliage of these trees incorporates depictions of both theological and secular themes. Alongside stories from the Old Testament, such as the Original Sin, Cain and Abel, Noah’s Ark, the Tower of Babel, Samson and the Lion, and many more, are topics from a variety of other sources (Fig. 3). Scattered across the entire floor is a profusion of animals and hybrids, as if the floor itself is a huge bestiary<sup>3</sup> (Figs. 4, 4a). Warriors and travelers, protagonists of popular secular tales “hang” from the branches, such as King Arthur next to the doors of the terrestrial paradise in the east, and Alexander the Great (356 B.C.E.–323 B.C.E.), adjacent to the entrance in the west (Fig. 5). Mythological figures like the goddess Diana, whom some art historians interpret as an Amazon,<sup>4</sup> and Kairos, the god of opportunity and luck, also appear<sup>5</sup> (Fig. 6). Some of the depictions could have been familiar visually to the worshipers due to the use of conventional iconography (Fig. 7), while others were known from ekphrasis in popular narratives, either Latin or vernacular, written or oral,<sup>6</sup> but there are also depictions that have no precedents.

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**1** Otranto is a town in the province of Lecce, Apulia, Southern Italy. It is located on the east coast of the Salento peninsula. The cathedral was consecrated in the year 1088.

**2** The apsis mosaic does not feature trees. The mosaic floor of Otranto Cathedral can be seen online at: <http://www.italianways.com/the-great-medieval-mosaic-of-the-ottranto-cathedral> (last accessed on Dec. 15, 2017).

**3** This is a general impression but upon closer examination, many of these hybrid creatures do not really resemble specific animals in bestiaries.

**4** Manuel Castiñeiras, “D’Alexander à Arthur: l’imaginaire Normand dans la mosaïque d’Otranto,” *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 37 (2006): 135–53; here 135.

**5** Christine Ungruh, *Das Bodenmosaik der Kathedrale von Otranto (1163–1165), Normannische Herrscherideologie als Endzeitvision*. Studien zur Kunstgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit, 9 (Affalterbach: Didymos-Verlag, 2013), 39, 50–51. Kairos appears in the left (north) aisle.

**6** Manuel Castiñeiras, “D’Alexander à Arthur” (see note 4), 135–53, 304.

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**Fig. 1:** Map of south Italy, Otranto



**Fig. 2:** Part of the nave mosaic floor, Otranto Cathedral (1163–1165), public domain



Fig. 3: Cain and Abel (Photo © Nurit Golan)



Figs. 4, 4a: Animals (Photos © Nurit Golan)



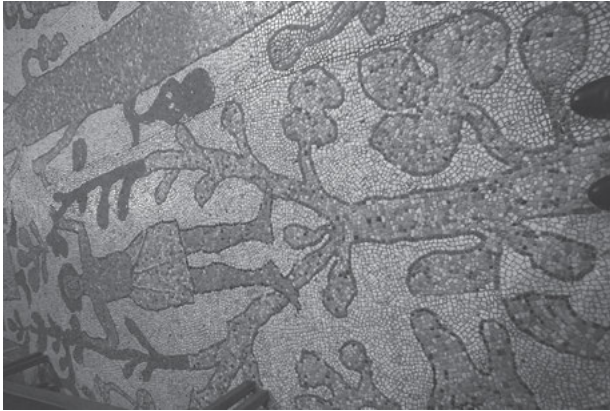
**Fig 5:** Alexander the Great and his griffons (Photo © Nurit Golan)



**Fig. 6:** Kairos, the God of Opportunity (Photo © Nurit Golan)

Trees and their branches are not the only method of arranging the vast and diverse literary and visual information provided here. Groups of roundels feature in some locations of the floor, and seem to derive ichnographically from the *rota*, which was a common type of graphical representation in diagrams appearing in manuscripts, scientific as well as exegetical.<sup>7</sup> The eastern part of the nave displays

<sup>7</sup> Harry Bober, "An Illustrated Medieval School-Book of Bede's '*De natura rerum*,'" *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 19/20 (1957): 64–97; Bianca Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things: Science and Eschatology in Early Medieval Art* (Regensburg: Schnell + Steiner, 2003), 65–221. On the circle as a conceptual device, see Naomi Reed Kline, *Maps of Medieval Thought*



**Fig. 7:** Men on the trees (Photo © Nurit Golan)

twelve roundels featuring the Zodiac and the “Works of the Months,” depicting the twelve calendric months<sup>8</sup> (Fig. 8). In the choir, sixteen roundels (4X4) feature hybrid creatures such as a centaur, a unicorn, a mermaid/siren<sup>9</sup> (Fig. 9), and

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(Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 7–48. A very good example of a combination of the schematic tree with a *rota* can be seen in many figural representations of the Tree of Life, the Tree of Virtues, which often appears in *speculum theologiae*, the Tree of Jesse, *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville, *Liber floridus*, etc. Many of these are reproduced in Manuel Lima, *The Book of Trees, Visualizing Branches of Knowledge* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2013). For examples of figures using trees and roundels, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tree\\_of\\_virtues\\_and\\_tree\\_of\\_vices](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tree_of_virtues_and_tree_of_vices) (last accessed on Jan. 5, 2018).

**8** Some “Works” are depicted as conventional agricultural works connected to the specific season, while others are original and the meaning of their connection to the specific month is debatable, as I’ll show later regarding the month of March.

**9** Grazio Gianfreda, *Il mosaico di Otranto, Biblioteca Medioevale in immagini, Poema in tre Cantiche* (Lecce: Edizioni del Grifo, 2008), 102. Gianfreda stresses the fact that the Siren is known for her beautiful voice and singing, and is combined here with other animals that appear in this mosaic playing various instruments like the harp, flute, and trumpets. For a contextualization of the fish tailed woman, in much wider cultural and historical contexts, see Jaqueline Leclercq-Marx, “La sirène et l’(ono)centaure dans le “*Physiologus*” Grec et Latin et dans quelques Bestiaires: le texte et l’image,” *Bestiaires médiévaux: nouvelles perspectives sur les manuscrits et les tradition textuelles*, ed. Boudouin Van Den Abele (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 2005), 169–82. Leclercq mentions that her beauty and erotic qualities originated from the sea in which she dwells, which is the origin of Venus. In Otranto, she matches these descriptions with her large open eyes, accentuated breasts, green earrings, and long dark braids. The siren appears in most versions of the *Physiologus*, as well as in Isidore of Sevilla, *Etimologiae*, as a positive being considered to be a sign of good luck. Albrecht Classen, “Water Creatures, Wells,





**Fig. 8:** The works of the months (public domain)



**Fig. 9:** Siren (Photo © Nurit Golan)



**Fig. 10:** Animals (Photos © Nurit Golan)

animals such as antelope, rooster, fox, and more (Fig. 10). In other roundels close by we find Adam and Eve and King Solomon seated upon his throne, as well as the Queen of Sheba (Fig. 11). Both trees and roundels, sometimes combined, tend to feature quite frequently in diagrammatic representations.

For over a century art historians have sought a coherent “theory” regarding the meaning and background of this artefact. A vast extent of knowledge, scientific and ecclesiastic, classical and Christian, Latin and vernacular, is embedded in this floor.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that previous research can be divided into two almost contradictory groups: one that perceives in the mosaic depictions mainly of an ecclesiastical and exegetical significance; while the other line of interpretation regards it as a secular, literary, and scientific presentation.<sup>11</sup>

In this article I interweave two related claims – pertaining to science and religious belief – regarding this tremendous work of art. The mosaic depicts the worldview of a highly successful, wealthy, and very educated society. This

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the Other Life, Hybridity and the Organic Dimension, the Myth of Melusine in the Prose Romance by Jean d’Arras,” in id., *Water in Medieval Literature: An Ecocritical Reading*. Ecocritical Theory and Practice (Lanham, MD, Boulder, CO, New York, and London: Lexington Books, 2018), 207–18, argues that here we find a very early representative of the Melusine figure.

**10** It is no wonder that one of the well-known and often-quoted studies on the mosaics used the word ‘enigma’ in the title. See Carl Arnold Willemsen, *L’enigma di Otranto, Il mosaico pavimentale del presbitero Pantaleone nella Cattedrale*. Civiltà e storia, 1 (Galatina: Mario Congado Editore, 2002)

**11** The first group of art historians perceives most of the floor’s depictions as alluding to the sinning humanity, or even as a subversive message directed at the king; while the other group sees in it also the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the versatility of the cosmos as it is culturally understood thanks to God and human wisdom.





**Fig. 11:** King Solomon (public domain)

worldview spans heterogeneous sources of knowledge of science and belief. The complex artefact offers a depiction of a rich intellectual world in which contradictions are embedded and whose “organizing principles” (trees and roundels) were not strange to the educated eye. The contemporary society for which such a floor was created did not consider natural philosophy to be inconsistent with Christianity. They embraced what we might consider today, anachronistically, as contradictions, and were happy to host griffons and other mythical creatures alongside biblical depictions in a church. This is why it should not be treated in a binary way, as it has been in most of the previous research, since both ways of understanding the world – the secular and the ecclesiastic, merge here into one unified praise of the Creator. The tree as a growing living thing and the harmonious roundels represent the notion of order and indicate the intention to consolidate Nature and secular learning with Christianity (Figs 2, 8).

The forming of an intellectual world image and the creation of visual ways to depict it reflect a process of self-identification and self-determination. The mapping of all the knowledge available to members of a certain social group, and especially its manifestation (and the floor mosaic is certainly such an act),



**Fig. 12:** Atlas and the cosmos (Photo © Nurit Golan)

define and differentiate this social group from others. A world image that attests to a highly educated and erudite society serves as a status symbol and might also have other, ulterior, political aims.

For the twelfth-century upper-class aristocrats and ecclesiastics, in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily, knowledge and education had become an important status symbol. Demonstrating one's education and depth of knowledge indicated one's belonging to the ruling class. The intellectual aura depicted in the cathedral, in such an outstanding form, was certainly a message intended to reflect the political status of the initiator of the mosaic – Archbishop Jonathas, who was Otranto's leading figure and a prominent member of society.<sup>12</sup> The mosaic floor of Otranto Cathedral, in presenting this versatile world image, is a document attesting to the intellectual and heterogeneous society of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily, especially in Puglia as part of the kingdom, and to the political aspirations of Otranto's ruling class. The worshiper, walking into the church, sets his/her foot on a virtual road, travelling to vast worlds of wisdom.

The mosaic offers a sophisticated presentation of an image of the universe and its history as understood and believed by its patron. The church becomes here an allegoric visual depiction of the world, conveying all the information and knowledge available to an expected erudite audience. An abstraction of the cosmos, its source in cosmology, is even depicted in the right nave (south) at the top of the tree (south-east), that is, Atlas with the cosmos depicted as a circle on his shoulders (Fig. 12).

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<sup>12</sup> The patron of the mosaic, Archbishop Jonathas, and its maker, the presbyter Pantaleone from the known monastery St. Nicola di Casole, will be discussed later.

Similar to a pictorial encyclopaedia we find here both the secular and the sacred, geography, cosmology, history, and literature. The metaphor of the mosaic as a huge pictorial library has indeed been used by art historians.<sup>13</sup> Adhering to the same metaphor, we should take the opportunity to learn more about the “librarian” who chose these specific “books” and shared them with the worshipers in this way. In short, as this paper will argue, the mosaic can serve us as a key to unlock the notion of world knowledge and its social significance, as it became assembled in Otranto, as part of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily, during the twelfth century.

Many parallels can be found between the representation of certain topics in the mosaic and the *mappaemundi* of that period or later, such as the terrestrial Paradise depicted in the east, in the maps next to Asia, and which in Otranto was located in the eastern part of the nave; and the apsis, a semi-circle, which depicts a rich marine scenery that brings to mind the ocean. In manuscript maps it was depicted as a circle full of fishes surrounding the world, as in the Ebstorf *mappaemundi* (thirteenth century).<sup>14</sup> The history of Creation and the first era of Mankind appear in both genres.

The approach to Time, which relates to biblical time, legendary-imaginary, calendric, and cosmological time, is very similar in both map and floor. The Works of the Months and the Zodiac signs are depicted side by side with biblical stories and legendary heroes.<sup>15</sup> The world of Alexander the Great and other heroes from the realm of written courtly literature and the oral vernacular tradition, can also be found in both genres, as for example in the Hereford Cathedral *mappaemundi*

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**13** Grazio Gianfreda, *Il Mosaico di Otranto* (see note 9); Marcelo Ciccuto, “Sogni di una precoce figurazione volgare nel mosaic pavimentale di Otranto,” *Studi per Umberto Carpi, un saluto da allievi e colleghi pizani*, ed. Marco Santagata and Alfredo Stussi (Pisa: Edizione Est, 2000), 291–97; here, 293. Ciccuto claims that the program of the floor translates into pictures the rich library of St. Nicola di Casole, the monastery from which might have come the maker of the mosaic, the presbyter Pantaleone.

**14** Castiñeiras González, Manuel Antonio, “L'Orient immaginato nel mosaic di Otranto,” *Medioevo Mediterraneo*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milan: Fondazione Monte di Parma, 2007), 590–603; here 590–92; Hartmut Kugler, “Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte: Ein europäisches Weltbild im deutschen Mittelalter,” *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 116.1 (1987): 1–29; for an extensive study of the Ebstorf map, see Marcia Kupfer, “Reflections on the Ebstorf Map: Cartography, Theology and *dilectio speculationis*,” *The Medieval Geographies, Cartography and Geographical Thought in the Latin West and Beyond: 300–1600*, ed. Keith D. Lilley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 100–26; See also Na'ama Shulman's contribution in this volume.

**15** They appear also in encyclopedic works. See Petrus Comestor *Scolastica historia, liber Genesis*, ed. Agneta Sylwan. Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis, 191 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005).



**Figs. 13, 13a:** Hybrids (Photos © Nurit Golan)

(ca. 1300).<sup>16</sup> Even though these maps are dated later than the floor, they convey a conceptual similarity in regard to the material that was considered appropriate for inclusion in a depicted world image. Some of the other elements common to both are the animals and hybrid creatures, as well as the strange or monstrous races of the world (Figs. 13, 13a).

The concept of Place was intertwined with a concept of Time – historical, legendary, and cosmological. Instead of rivers and seas, and perhaps also roads,

<sup>16</sup> On medieval maps and the Hereford map in particular, see Naomi Reed Kline, *Maps of Medieval Thought* (see note 7), 93–93.

which formed the skeleton around which the texts and illustrations in the maps were organized, the floor presented trees and roundels.<sup>17</sup> This visual encyclopedia merges the terrestrial geography, signified by animals and strange peoples,<sup>18</sup> with the holy and secular histories as told in the Bible and the vernacular courtly literature. Nature and Christianity thereby combine in harmony, which is God's creation.

## The Arrangement of Knowledge and its Significance

Decorated mosaic floors began to appear in southern Italy around the twelfth century, such as in Bari, Tarent, Trani, Taranto, and elsewhere.<sup>19</sup> Previous research has pointed out the many similarities between these floors and the one I engage with here.<sup>20</sup> There is, however, one big difference: the mosaic floor of Otranto Cathedral is the only place in which three huge trees constitute the core, the skeleton, of the depiction. The trees have received mostly metaphorical interpretations in previous research, while the roundels, which are almost as dominant as the trees and also organize and accentuate the data, have been neglected by research. Both trees and roundels derive from the diagrams that were familiar to the educated person from manuscripts, scientific and exegetical, emphasizing the learned impression and making it clear that both form and content were a deliberate choice.

What marks major periods of growing knowledge are the concurrent attempts made to organize the knowledge within a general framework. This framework provides context, making it easy to understand, memorize as a whole, retrieve and enable “meta- observations” of what might initially seem to be unconnected pieces of observation. Indeed, this – the framework – is what turns knowhow and observations into knowledge. It can safely be said that the arrangement of data

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17 On the roads and trees as knowledge visualization abstracts, see Francis T. Marchese, “Virtues and Vices: Examples of Medieval Knowledge visualization,” *17th International Conference on Information Visualization*, ed. Ebad Banissi (London: IEEE, 2013), 359–65.

18 Such as antelope, elephant etc., or the people *Ichtyophages*, gymnosophist, sphinx, and so on.

19 Xavier Barral I Altet, *Le décor du pavement au Moyen Âge, Les mosaïques de France et d'Italie*. Collection de l'Ecole Française de Rome, 429 (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2010), 301–78.

20 Chiara Settis-Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri elevati per griphos ad aerem* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1973), 295; Ungruh, *Das Bodenmosaik der Kathedrale von Otranto* (see note 5), 374–79. The similarities lie in the depicted topics, such as the hybrid animals, or Alexander and his two griffons as in Tarent and Taranto on 358–84, especially 378.

into information underpins the early development of what we call today “scientific thought.” I perceive in this floor an attempt to map the vast knowledge and to put it into form, thereby harmonizing the discrepancies, and attesting to the fact that the years of its making were indeed a time of formation and fast expanding knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

As mentioned above, art historians in the last 100 years have sought to decipher the tremendous amount of knowledge, scientific and ecclesiastic, classical and Christian, Latin, and vernacular, embedded in this floor. God’s presence and immanence needed to be made clear beyond doubt, especially as God and holy figures could not be depicted on the floor. In this way of apprehending the world, the link between places and events, past or remote past, biblical or legendary,<sup>22</sup> generated arguments regarding the course of history and the nature of Creation. The ideas expressed in this floor, even when belonging to scientific and secular thinking, were still part of the realm of religious belief. It is a fault of modern thinking to differentiate between them, as they belonged to a Christian intellectual society that did not see any contradiction in God’s multifaceted created universe. The trees and the roundels indicate, as noted, a discernible effort to arrange the vast knowledge available at the time, which was quite often secular, into an accepted Christian ideology. The binary, contrastive perception of nature on one side and Christian dogma on the other, did not exist for the patron and artisans of the floor. The overall significance of the mosaic seems to be that of harmony, even though at times this might seem to us impossible. The depictions here constitute polysemic signs that indicate a cosmic harmony, with the trees being the symbol of this harmony through their material existence, growth process, and metaphoric significance.

The abstracting visual aids employed here, the trees and the roundels, function as organizers of data, as a sort of a diagram, and indeed they are recognizable as such from schemata illustrating other works that deal with extensive data, scientific or exegetical. The tree is an ancient didactic means used to help in organizing and memorizing complicated data.<sup>23</sup> Such “tree” diagrams came into vast use in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in manuscripts as in church decora-

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**21** The twelfth century in the Kingdom of Sicily was certainly a period of growth of knowledge. More on this outstanding intellectual dynasty will be discussed later.

**22** There was no difference between events that were biblical, legendary, or actual, since all were grasped as events that had occurred in time and place under Providence.

**23** Michael Gorman, “The Diagrams in the Oldest Manuscripts of Cassiodorus *Institutiones*,” *Revue Benedictine* 110 (2000): 27–41; Annemieke R. Verboon, “Einen alten Baum verpflanzt man nicht: Die Metapher des Porphyrianischen Baums im Mittelalter,” *Visuelle Modelle*, ed. Ingeborg Reichle, Steffen Siegel, and Achim Spelten (Munich and Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2008), 251–68.

tion. They reflect a spectrum of representations, with one pole being geometrical and abstract and the other pole purely pictorial,<sup>24</sup> such as the familiar example of the Tree of Jesse.<sup>25</sup> The roundels in the Otranto choir, at the top of the tree, enhance this understanding as they function in a similar way.<sup>26</sup> In the case of Otranto Cathedral, the floor can be described as an image containing a diagrammatic substance that reflects a search for form.<sup>27</sup> It is important to note, however, that the mosaic trees do not reveal any strong connections between their parts (such as logical, temporal, or causal). Their main purpose thus might not be only mnemonic and pedagogical.<sup>28</sup> Rather, they might be more like road maps, for both navigation and construction of the complex forms of knowledge depicted

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**24** Manuel Lima, *The Book of Trees, Visualizing Branches of Knowledge*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2013), 33–35, 98–99. Although most of Lima's medieval examples are later than the period I deal with here, the idea of the spectrum of abstract vs. pictorial becomes very clear from the choice of his visual examples.

**25** Annemieke R. Verboon, "The Medieval Tree of Porphyry: An Organic Structure of Logic," *The Tree: Symbol, Allegory, and Mnemonic Device in Medieval Art and Thought*, ed. Pippa Salonijs and Andrea Worm. International Medieval Research, 20 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 95–116; Pippa Salonijs, "Arbor Jesse – *Lignum vitae*: The Tree of Jesse, the Tree of Life, and the Mendicants in the Late Medieval Orvieto," *The Tree*, 213–41; Andrea Worm, "Arbor autem humanem genus significat: Trees of Genealogy and Sacred History in the Twelfth Century," *The Tree: Symbol, Allegory, and Mnemonic Device*, 35–68.

**26** Harry Bober, "An Illustrated Medieval School-Book of Bede's 'De natura rerum,'" *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 19/20 (1957): 64–97; Bianca Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things: Science and Eschatology in Early Medieval Art* (Regensburg: Schnell + Steiner, 2003), 65–221; Naomi Reed Kline, *Maps of Medieval Thought* (see note 7), 7–48.

**27** Eric Auerbach, *Figura* (1938; New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 1–76; Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 122–88; here 126–27, 248–57. Carruthers discusses the didactic power of the bestiaries, teaching morals through pleasurable reading. She also deals with the mnemonic power of graphical presentation such as diagrams, which simplify complicated intellectual content and enhance learning; Christoph Lüthy and Alexis Smets, "Words, Lines, Diagrams, Images: Toward a History of Scientific Imagery," *Early Science and Medicine* 14 (2009): 398–439; Eckart Conrad Lutz, "Diagramm, Diagrammatik und diagrammatisches Denken," *Diagramm und Text: Diagrammatische Strukturen und die Dynamisierung von Wissen und Erfahrung*, ed. Eckart C. Lutz (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2014), 9–22; Jeffrey F. Hamburger, "Hrabanus redivivus: Berthold of Nuremberg's Marian Supplement to *In honorem sanctae crucis*," *Diagramm und Text*, 175–204; Eric Ramírez-Weaver, "'So you can understand this better': Art, Science, and Cosmology for Courtiers, William of Conches's *Diagrammaticon philosophiae*," *Diagramm und Text*, 319–48;

**28** Ayelet Even-Ezra investigated the thirteenth-century horizontal tree diagrams representing structures of scholastic questions, sketched by scholars and students in notebooks. By analogy, I apply her contention regarding complex scholastic writings in regard to the mosaic. See Ayelet Even-Ezra, "Schemata as Maps and Editing Tools in Thirteenth-Century Scholasticism," *Manuscripta* 61.1 (2017): 21–71; here 26–33.

here. Perhaps they are more like the lists of content that gained popularity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps, indeed, the mosaic is more like a library catalogue, in which some books have no relation to others; they find themselves on the same shelves just because they are owned by the same person, and this choice can certainly tell us a lot about their owner.

A valid exegetical explanation that would fit the Christian belief has been sought in a diversity of sources by previous research. It is beyond the scope of this article to include all the diverse interpretations, but I shall refer to a few of them. It is my contention that these contradictory sources and explanations can accommodate each other since the heterogeneity of this mosaic floor is a central part of its significance. What we have here is an unfolding of an image of the world that consolidates the many controversies, of which the creators of the floor were well aware. In the following section I examine some of the topics depicted in the mosaic as examples to illustrate my contention.

## Animals and Hybrids

Although descriptions of animals in the Middle Ages were based on authoritative Latin texts, such as *Physiologus*, or Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, which made their existence credible, their strange characteristics made it difficult to reconcile them with the Creator of the biblical universe. For the classical authors, the animals primarily belonged to the realm of a location.<sup>30</sup> The fascination with the distant, strange, and unknown had to reconcile the magical strange and distant worlds with the Christian theology. The mosaic floor, which displays so many depictions of living creatures, reconciles natural histories drawn from antiquity with Christian theology, as did the bestiary compilations. The bestiaries combined folkloric tales with theology and thereby provided the bridge enabling their depiction next to biblical stories. The theme of creation of the strange animals and monstrous nations allowed a combination of pagan and Christian, imaginary and realistic sources to be included without disturbing the sanctity of some of the topics that found themselves side by side on the floor.

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<sup>29</sup> Malcolm C. Parkes, "The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinario* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book," *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. Jonathan J. G. Alexanders and Margaret T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 115–41; here 122–27.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander the Great became a model for kingly behavior. For an elaboration on this topic, see Castiñeiras, "D'Alexander à Arthur" (see note 4), 135–53.





**Fig. 14:** Elephants (Photo © Nurit Golan)

Elephants in the bestiaries were connected to Paradise and to the Fall (Fig. 14). As described in various sources, the female elephant needed to eat a special fruit, the mandrake, in order to become pregnant, otherwise she refused to copulate with the male.<sup>31</sup> Alluding in this way to the eating of the forbidden fruit by Eve and Adam, the depiction of the two large elephants at the entrance was interpreted as a prelude to the Original Sin.<sup>32</sup> These huge elephants, portrayed close to Alexander and his griffons, might also symbolize India, which he, as a prototype traveller, had reached.<sup>33</sup> In the popular romances of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in Latin and in the vernacular, Alexander was described as a courageous king and warlord. His travels and adventures became a model for other vernacular writings that told of the dangers of strange and mysterious worlds, full of magic and mysteries. Some of the many animals depicted in the mosaic can be identified, but most of them seem to be imaginary and do not appear in bestiaries. Their proximity to the Macedonian king made acceptable everything that was strange, magic, and miraculous. His depiction here provided a rationale for their appearance.

<sup>31</sup> Naomi Reed Kline, *Maps of Medieval Thought* (see note 7), 100 and note 6 on the same page.

<sup>32</sup> Laura Pasquini, “Salire sull’albero: Note su alcuni motivi iconografici nel mosaico della cattedrale di Otranto,” *Atti del XII colloquio dell’Associazione Italiana per lo Studio e la Conservazione del Mosaico con il patrocinio del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, dell’Università di Padova, della Regione del Veneto, della Provincia di Padova et del Comune di Padova*, ed. Claudia Angelelli and Andrea Paribeni (Tivoli, Rome: Scripta Manent, 2007), 513–24; here 513–14.

<sup>33</sup> Ungruh, *Das Bodenmosaik der Kathedrale von Otranto* (see note 5), 248–50.

## ***Superbia* or else?**

The most common line of interpretation has taken the approach of seeking exegetical meaning, informed by the seminal work of Chiara Settis-Frugoni,<sup>34</sup> who concentrated on the depiction of Alexander the Great rising to heaven on the back of two wild griffons, which he tamed using two skewers of meat, luring them to rise higher and higher to reach the stars. This half-real half-legendary figure was considered the core of the meaning of the visual program.<sup>35</sup> The ancient tale of the Macedonian king, unique in its popularity, was interpreted as the very depiction of *Superbia* – pride, the cardinal sin of human pride against God. Frugoni connected this to other depictions on the nave floor, such as that of the tower of Babel, which is in a chiastic position from Alexander, and the sinning Adam and Eve, depicted in the choir in two roundels at the top of the tree. The central nave was thus considered by Frugoni to indicate this deadly sin of pride.

The human walk along or “up” the tree was seen as the path that could end either in Hell, which was depicted on the left nave floor, together with Satan, fires and the Damned, or in the bosom of Abraham, depicted close by (Figs. 15, 16). The terrestrial Paradise, at the far eastern part of the central nave, was also a distant possibility, but from their initial position all that the believer could see was the expulsion of the First Couple from it. The huge tree of the nave was interpreted in its exegetical context as the Tree of Good and Evil, which might become the Tree of Life once the right path was chosen. Laura Pasquiny suggested an allegorical connection between the tree in the nave and the mystery of the Cross as a symbol of life in Jesus,<sup>36</sup> and its “climbing” as the search for redemption. This was clarified by Vera von Falkenhausen, who also saw in the tree an indication of the Cross, and noted the possible historical connection created by the reliquary of a piece of the True Cross allegedly owned by the cathedral.<sup>37</sup>

This approach influenced many other art historians who were looking for sin as an explanation for other topics.<sup>38</sup> The following few examples serve to

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<sup>34</sup> Chiara Settis-Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri elevati per griphos* (see note 20), 265–340; Chiara Frugoni, “La leggenda di Alessandro Magno,” *Le imprese di Alessandro Magno in Oriente*, ed. Laura Stanga (Genoa: Palazzo di Principe, 2006), 61–8.

<sup>35</sup> While I agree with Frugoni that Alexander is in the center of this visual program, my arguments are different as will be discussed further.

<sup>36</sup> Laura Pasquiny, *Salire sull'albero* (see note 32), 513–14.

<sup>37</sup> Vera von Falkenhausen, “Tra Occidente e Oriente: Otranto in epoca bizantina,” *Otranto nel Medioevo, tra Bisanzio e l'Occidente*, ed. Hubert Houben (Galatina: Mario Congado, 2007), 13–60; here 24.

<sup>38</sup> Frugoni's interpretation indicating Alexander's depiction as the core of the pictorial program, and at the sin of *superbia* as the main issue here, has greatly influenced many art historians,



**Fig. 15:** Satan and the damned (Photo © Nurit Golan)



**Fig. 16:** Abraham and the redeemed (Photo © Nurit Golan)



Fig. 17: March: *Spinario* and the sign of the month (Photo © Nurit Golan)

illustrate my point: Among the Works of the Months depicted in roundels, in the eastern part of the central nave, the month of March depicts a naked young boy sitting and looking at his foot, as if trying to pull out a thorn from it. This is clearly the familiar *Spinario* which, together with the relevant zodiac sign of two fish, was chosen to signify this particular month (Fig. 17). Much has been written to explain why the depiction, which is clearly based ichnographically on a small statue that was more usually to be found in Roman gardens (there was even one in the garden of the Lateran in Rome), was chosen to signify the month of March. The fact that this young boy was depicted naked in a position that would probably have exposed his genitalia, made it, in the connection of Otranto, into a particular sign of sin, of *voluptas*. Laura Pasquiny noted examples of dressed *Spinario* to strengthen her point that the Otranto one was definitely intended as an indication of sin, and that the thorn pricking the flesh was meant to symbolize carnal lust.<sup>39</sup> She discusses the *Spinario* as a negative attribute featuring aphrodisiac

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such as Marcelo Ciccuto, “Sogni di una precoce figurazione” (see note 13), 291–97; Cesare Daquino, *Bizantini di terra d’Otranto, San Nicola di Casole* (Lecce: Capone, 2000), 3; Laura Pasquini, “Salire sull’albero,” (see note 32), 513–24; Pasquini, “Marzo, ‘Spinario’ nel mosaico pavimentale di Otranto e nell’iconografia medievale,” *Atti del XIII colloquio, Canosa di Puglia, 21–24 febbraio, 2007*, ed. Claudia Angelelli (Tivoli, Rome: Scripta Manent, 2008), 311–22; Pasquini, “Artù, sovrano salvaggio e temerario: nel mosaico della cattedrale di Otranto e nell’iconografia medievale,” *Atti del XIV Colloquio dell’Associazione Italiana per lo Studio e la Conservazione del Mosaico, Spoleto, 7–9, febbraio, 2008*, ed. Claudia Angelelli (Tivoli, Rome: Scripta Manent, 2009), 359–69.

<sup>39</sup> Laura Pasquini, “Marzo, ‘Spinario’” (see note 38), 311–22, here 317.

qualities, and as an indication that March was considered not a good month in respect to the weather.<sup>40</sup>

While this interpretation clearly makes sense, it should not be ignored that the appearance of the naked *Spinario* indicates primarily a familiarity with classical visual art and its conventions. Hubert Houben contends that even after the conquest of Otranto by the Normans in 1068 the Greek culture and language still predominated.<sup>41</sup> The Latinization that the Norman kings had introduced was still in its prime.<sup>42</sup> The familiarity with the Greek artistic conventions, so clearly indicated in the case of the *Spinario*, could, however also explain the many naked figures depicted on the mosaic floor. Perhaps they signify an artistic revival of a classical convention, and not necessarily the sinners that previous research has suggested.

The combination of the secular with the deeply eschatological has been described by Christine Ungruh. Interpreting the mosaic of the apsis as a portrayal of the Apocalypse,<sup>43</sup> she presented an interesting interpretation, totally secular, for some of the depictions in the west part of the nave. Referring to the two combating men (Fig. 18, 18a), the horse, the two elephants, the goddess Diana (or an Amazon),<sup>44</sup> and Alexander on the griffons, and including the many musical instruments that appear all over the floor,<sup>45</sup> she suggested that all these were a possible depiction of the Hippodrome of Constantinople, or the Roman arena.

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<sup>40</sup> Pasquiny, “Marzo, ‘Spinario’” (see note 38), 312–17.

<sup>41</sup> Hubert Houben, “Comunità cittadina e vescovi in età Normanno-Sveva,” in *Otranto nel Medioevo, tra Bisanzio e l'Occidente*, ed. Hubert Houben (Galatina: Mario Congado, 2007), 5–12, 61–97; Cosimo Damiano Poso, “Immagine e forma di Otranto dai Normanni agli Angioini,” *Otranto nel Medioevo*, 99–173, here 99–110; Vera von Falkenhausen, “Die griechischen Gemeinden in Messina und Palermo (11. bis 13. Jahrhundert),” *Urban Dynamics and Transcultural Communication in Medieval Sicily*, ed. Theresa Jäck and Mona Kirsch. Mittelmeerstudien, 17 (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2017), 36–38. The Latinization that the Hautevilles tried to promote, was at its prime and Greek was still the *lingua franca*, in Puglia as in Sicily.

<sup>42</sup> Archbishop Jonathas played an active part in the Latinization of Otranto. See Manuel Castiñeiras, “D’Alexander à Arthur,” (see note 4), 145; Settis-Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri* (see note 20), 310.

<sup>43</sup> Christine Ungruh, “Zur Ikonographie von Apokalypsekomentaren: Das Apsisbodenmosaik der Kathedrale von Otranto,” *Consilium medii aevi* 3 (2000): 59–89.

<sup>44</sup> One of Alexander’s adventures was a visit to the kingdom of the Amazons.

<sup>45</sup> For more on this interesting interpretation, which combines secular and ecclesiastic significance, see Christine Ungruh, *Das Bodenmosaik* (see note 5), 63–66. The abundance of different musical instruments, some played by men and some by animals, was also noted by other art historians but put in an ecclesiastic context. On the role of music in this mosaic see Garazio Gianfredda, *La Musica nel mosaico di Otranto*. Hydrunthina volumina, 3 (Lecce: Edizioni del Grifo, 1996).



**Figs. 18, 18a:** Warriors and music (Photo © Nurit Golan)

Alexander's rise to heaven was interpreted in the Greek tradition as an apotheosis of the emperor, and the griffons as creatures escorting the sun god in his rise to heaven, as *Apollini consecratae*, as Frugoni has written.<sup>46</sup> While Alexander's rise to heaven might be a depiction of *superbia* in the Latin world, Ungruh agrees that there is not necessarily a connection between this depiction and the Tower of Babel and the rest of the nave's depictions as Frugoni suggested, since the depiction of the Tower of Babel is a conventional end-scene of many Genesis cycles, and this nave certainly presents an elaborate Genesis cycle.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Settis-Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri* (see note 20), 40.

<sup>47</sup> Ungruh, *Das Bodenmosaik* (see note 5), 63–6.

The popularity of the Alexander legend was established in particular in France, where the *Roman de Alexander* appeared in a courtly version and gained considerable popularity.<sup>48</sup> The Norman court was greatly influenced by French courtly culture.<sup>49</sup> This ancient tale acquired many variations and was understood as a tale with an intricate meaning.<sup>50</sup> Many aspects of the endeavors of Alexander during his short life revealed his courage and curiosity in his encounter with the mysteries of the world. What made him especially relevant to this specific context was the fact that he was considered not only the conqueror of the East, but also of Calabria and Puglia. One of the particularly relevant stories recounted his conquest of Sicily.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the princely courts in Europe saw in Alexander a model of a knightly authoritative and brave ruler. At the same time, however, he was a man whose hubris overpowered him, which should be a warning to princes. This made him a complex role model. There is, therefore, the possibility that the floor functioned as a kind of depicted “Mirror for Princes” (*Speculum principum*). The Mirrors for Princes were tractates that advised the prince, the ruler, how to fulfill the duties that had been entrusted to him by God. An important part of the *speculum*, whose approach to the princely addressee, in general, is positive and appreciative, relates to kings as *exempla*. Some of the noted kings were biblical and some belonged to the realm of vernacular or classical tales, some real and some imaginary. The mosaic floor depicts the following rulers: King Solomon, Queen of Sheba, Alexander the Great, King Arthur, King of Nineveh. King William I (1120–1166), who is probably the addressee of this Mirror, is mentioned by name as “triumphatore,” but he is not included here.

Manuel Castiñeiras suggested that the Otranto floor used *ekphrasis* much as it appeared in the *Roman de Alexander*, which became extremely popular

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48 Frugoni notes hundreds of references in writings and in art to this particular extremely popular tale. See Srttis-Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri* (see note 20), 5–112.

49 On the popularity of the *Roman de Alexander* in the French court and its positive interpretations in Byzantium, England, and France, see Settis-Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri* (see note 20), 147–264.

50 Settis-Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri* (see note 20), 10–14 notes that the first appearance of this popular story in writing was in the fourth century, in the Jerusalem Talmud, told by Rabi Yona. The Jerusalem Talmud is referred to on p. 12. This is particularly interesting because it is connected to a question regarding the shape of the earth as a globe and the ocean as a cauldron, since both could be seen by Alexander from above as he was flying on the griffons. The tale is told as an explanation to why the statue of the king holds a globe in his hand as part of his regalia. *Jerusalem Talmud*, Avoda Zara, 42, c.

"שהעולם עשוי ככדור אמר ר' יונה אלכסנדרוס מוקדון בד בטא מיסך לעיל והיה סלק וסלק עד שראה את העולם ככדור ואת הים כקדירה [...] תלמוד ירושלמי, עבודה זרה 42, ג' (Hebrew and Aramaic).

51 Manuel Castiñeiras, “D’Alexander à Arthur,” (see note 4), 44–145.



in England, Normandy, and France between the years 1150 and 1180. The text describes the point of view of Alexander from above, relating to what he had seen when he was drawn heavenward by the griffons. Consequently, his image in the mosaic appears “down” in the west, while all the rest is “above,” because it is what he sees. The Works of the Months, including the Zodiac symbols, for example, appear as part of the description of his journey, as do the animals, the monstrous people, etc. The textual description of the decoration of the walls in Alexander’s palace is very similar to many of the depictions in the mosaic.<sup>52</sup> The descriptions, according to Castiñeiras’s point of view, represent a literary convention. I see in Alexander a prototype of a traveller, an explorer of far regions, whose curiosity could not resist the mysteries of the universe, and not only a conqueror.

It seems that the answer to the question of why the *Roman de Alexander*, a Greek work of secular literature translated at the time from the Greek by Pseudo-Callisthenes into Latin, found its place in such a context is not an easy one to answer; or perhaps better said, its appearance here has many explanations. This topic, depicted at the entrance of the church, not covered by pews and larger than most of the other depicted subjects, illustrates several points. It is certainly a polysemic sign, secular and ecclesiastic, which indicates the cultural diffusion between the oral and the written literature, Latin and the vernacular, secular and ecclesiastic. It also attests to the political and cultural connections of the court of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily with other European courts, especially the French one.<sup>53</sup> This fact is no less important than it signifying *superbia*.

## King Arthur in Sicily ...

The appearance of King Arthur in the floor posed a problem for the kind of research that was looking to find Christian dogma in the mosaic (Fig. 19). If this floor’s topics are analogical to those of the *mappaemundi*, as I have postulated, it is not surprising that it depicts heroes of the secular courtly literature, since it is part of the heterogeneous world image that could be found in both

<sup>52</sup> Manuel Castiñeiras, “D’Alexander à Arthur” (see note 4), 135–53, 304; here, 140–45.

<sup>53</sup> If one is in need of proof, it can be found next to the Tower of Babel where a small check-board (draughts) is depicted. This game had become very popular in the French court in the twelfth century. Is it only a sign of sin, or evidence of cultural connections, or perhaps – both? See David Parlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 250–51.





**Fig. 19:** King Arthur (public domain)

genres. Other mosaic floors in Puglia display the same combination of topics: the mosaic floor of Brindisi Cathedral supposedly depicted another hero, in this case it was Roland, the literary hero of the *Chanson de Roland*.<sup>54</sup> Alexander featured also in Tarent, so it can safely be assumed that secular courtly literature was an accepted topic in the cathedrals of Puglia. However, because most of the floor mosaics in southern Italy have not survived, it is impossible to determine whether there were additional heroes from secular vernacular tales depicted in them too.

Arthur was noted in the *Historia Brittonum* from ca. 828 as *dux bellorum*. As a hero belonging to the Anglo-Norman literature, he was known both as an exceptionally brave fighter, especially in the wars against the pagans, and for his chivalrous conduct. The stories about Arthur and other aristocratic figures formed part of the tales about Charlemagne, who came from France. These stories became popular in the tenth century and reached a peak in the thirteenth century, making Arthur a chivalric role model.<sup>55</sup> In the year 1136 Geof-

<sup>54</sup> Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri* (see note 20), 309.

<sup>55</sup> The Arthurian romances have been researched widely and are beyond the scope of this article. To read more on this, see Norris J. Lacy, Geoffrey Ashe and al. *The Arthurian Encyclopedia*, The Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 931 (New York: Garland, 1991); Christopher W. Bruce, *The Arthurian Name Dictionary* (New York: Garland, 1999); Roger Sherman Loomis, *Arthurian Legends in Medieval Art* (Millwood, New York: Kraus, 1938, rpt. 1975); Roger S. Loomis, *Celtic Myths and Arthurian Romance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927).

frey of Monmouth (1095–1155) wrote the *Historia Regnum Britanniae* which also told about Arthur. In 1155 it was turned into verse and dedicated to the French queen, Eleonore of Aquitaine, by the Norman poet Robert Wace (1110–1174) who was her protégé.<sup>56</sup> The Sicilian court spoke French and imitated French courtly culture.

The depiction of King Arthur in the Otranto mosaic is intriguing in that this is only the second time ever of the appearance of this topic in visual art. The first time, also in Italy, was in Modena, in the year 1120. Arthur was depicted there in a relief with his knights, castle, and wife, all mentioned by name, on the archivolt of the *Porta della Pescheria* in Modena Cathedral.<sup>57</sup> Laura Pasquiny refers to reliefs of knights in combat on horseback at what seems to be the entrance to a castle on the archivolt of the Lions' portal of St. Nicola in Bari. She contends that this is also a depiction of King Arthur and his knights, similar to that in Modena, albeit without the names.<sup>58</sup> In Otranto, Arthur, on horseback, appears to be fighting Cath Palug, a huge cat that, according to a Gallic legend, terrorized the people of Lausanne.<sup>59</sup> In saving the people from this threat, which was at times described as Satan, Arthur was killed and arrived at the Underworld.

An interesting twist appears in one of the oral Arthurian romances, which connects King Arthur to Sicily and was written down by Gervase of Tilbury (1150–1220). The stories about Arthur became increasingly imaginative and established a connection to Sicily. The legend tells that after being wounded Arthur went to die on Avalon, a mysterious island. The end of the story, however, is that Arthur still continues to exist as a lord of the Underworld, where he dwells in the Mount Etna volcano in Sicily, with a group of knights. On certain nights, a group of knights on horsebacks can be seen riding not far from the volcano.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Roger S. Loomis, "Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Modena Archivolt: A Question of Precedence," *Speculum* 13 (1938): 221–31.

<sup>57</sup> On the *Porta della Pescheria*, see Lacy, Ashe and al. *The Arthurian Encyclopedia* (see note 55), 324–26.

<sup>58</sup> Laura Pasquiny, "Artù sovrano selvaggio e temerario nel mosaico della cattedrale di Otranto e nell'iconografia medievale," *Atti del XIV colloquio per lo Studio e la Consevazione del Mosaico* (see note 38), 359–69; here 363.

<sup>59</sup> Art historians note the changes that this figure suffered during the restorations of the nineteenth century. According to a drawing, Arthur did not wear a crown but a cap, and the position of his right hand is not at all clear. According to Castiñeiras Cath Palug was known as the Lord of the Celtic Hades. The naked figure next to Arthur he considers to be the wizard Merlin. For more on the connections between the mosaic's depictions and the different Arthurian romances, see Manuel Castiñeiras, "D'Alexander à Arthur" (see note 4), 143–51.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

The appearance of a British hero in the south of Italy indicates a diffusion of the secular courtly literature, attesting to its having roots in the oral literature. The addressees' acquaintance with these legends indicates them as belonging to the erudite class.

Arthur has been understood in some of the previous research as a sinner. He was among those who made their living through robbery, violence, and murder,<sup>61</sup> which raises the question of what is this half-legendary king doing depicted on the east side of the nave. The argument that Arthur had sinned through the use of excessive force was considered supported by his depiction in the vicinity of the story of Cain and Abel, where the mosaic portrays the first murder, as well as next to the depiction of the expulsion from Paradise of the sinning Adam and Eve.<sup>62</sup> This interpretation ignores the many versions of the story that clearly indicate Arthur as a chivalric role model of a ruler. He was doomed to Hell after a final fight with Satan. Carlo Ginzburg understood the death of the hero in a different way, contending that in all the literary cycles that describe the adventures of Arthur, there comes a moment in which he has a "wild fight" with Death. This is a literary convention that derives from a folkloric adaptation of the narrative. It attests to common oral sources, and does not necessarily indicate anything specific regarding the ethics of the hero.<sup>63</sup>

Portraying Arthur as a negative figure, moreover, contradicts the fact that the Normans of Britain considered the Breton king to be an example of a good and courageous king. The good political relations prevailing between the two Norman states, Sicily and England, tends to rule out the negative interpretation.

## A Political Message to the King and Barons

Frugoni suggested that the depiction of Alexander and the griffons might refer to the Byzantine *Basileus*, considered an enemy of the kingdom.<sup>64</sup> Since the kings of Sicily sought to imitate the Byzantine rulers in regalia and clothing, a subversive message, aimed at King William I, who was the ruling monarch at the time when the floor was created, might be hidden in this depicted metaphor that insinuated the enemy.

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<sup>61</sup> Marcelo Ciccuto, "Sogni di una precoce figurazione volgare" (see note 13), 296.

<sup>62</sup> Laura Pasquiny, "Artù sovrano selvaggio e temerario," (see note 58), 359–69; here 360–65.

<sup>63</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies, Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 85–6.

<sup>64</sup> Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri* (see note 20), 312–33.

The interpretations of the mosaic as expressing a negative approach to the king, are undoubtedly based on the history of the Normans in Puglia; and perhaps also influenced by the fact that, about a 100 years later, William was to become known as William “the Bad.”<sup>65</sup>

As attractive as the conspiracy theories are, and indeed, they offer very interesting research, I believe that they leave out some very important aspects of the art as well as of history. My contention is that the overall mosaic was intended to transmit a message of immense praise for the kingdom of Sicily and, consequently, that criticism of the king and kingdom in Otranto in the years of the floor’s creation, 1163–1165, was strictly out of the question. Only a comprehensive interpretation of this heterogenic work, relating to the socio-political situation, can therefore shed light on the intentions of the two individuals involved, and whose names appear more than once in the mosaic: Archbishop Jonathas (1163–1179), who initiated the work and paid for it, and Pantaleone, a presbyter from the Greek monastery St. Nicola di Casole (built in 1098–1099), who actually carried it out. This is clear from the inscription beneath the elephants at the entrance in the west which reads EX IONATH[E] DONIS PER DEXTERAM PANTELEONIS HOC OPVS INSIGNE EST SVPERVANS IMPENDIA DIGNE. This states that the archbishop paid and supervised and Pantaleone carried out the work with his right hand, meaning without sin, without error.

Apulia was conquered by the Norman clan of Hautville during the eleventh century. Otranto fell into their hands in 1068, less than a hundred years before the creation of the mosaic floor.<sup>66</sup> Being a rich and important port of the Adriatic Sea, situated at the beginning of *via Appia Traiana*, Otranto was of utmost importance for both the military and commerce. It also became the port from which pilgrims embarked for the Holy Land.

The geographer Muhammad Al-Idrisi was one of the many intellectuals active in the Sicilian court, and he produced a new kind of geographical map, considered to be an innovation in cartography. In his *Libero di Ruggero*, a geographical tractate, which he dedicated to his patron King Roger II of Sicily, he describes the coast from Reggio Calabria to Otranto.<sup>67</sup> This is the first written description of the town, its port, inhabitants, economy and culture. He describes Otranto as rich and densely populated by “believers in God.” He also mentions a big “House of God,” but it is not clear if he means the cathedral.

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<sup>65</sup> John Julius Norwich, *The Kingdom in the Sun: 1130–1194* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), 169–245.

<sup>66</sup> Graham A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 235.

<sup>67</sup> Poso, “Immagine e forma urbana di Otranto dai Normani agli Angioni” (see note 41), 106–10.

The outstanding location of the port is described in detail: it is situated exactly where the Mediterranean (“the Sea of Syria”) becomes the Adriatic (“the Sea of Venice”). He praises the city’s strong walls. Surrounded by sea from the south and by hills from the north, the port was well protected from the winds.<sup>68</sup> And, as if all these favorable conditions were not enough, Al-Idrisi adds a description of the river that disgorges to the sea not far from the port. Otranto was thus of extreme strategic importance and an asset in the struggle against Byzantium.<sup>69</sup>

Considered a prelude to the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1091, the conquest of Sicily just one year earlier, in 1090 had handed the Hauteville family a great deal of power.<sup>70</sup> In 1130, Count Roger II became king as well as legate of the Pope. The Latin Church in southern Italy and Sicily became under the full authority of the Norman dynasty (1140). William I managed to secure these two titles in the *Pactum Beneventanum* that he signed with Pope Adrian III in 1156.<sup>71</sup> This decree ratified his right to pass them on to his son.

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**68** Poso, “Imagine e forma urbana” (see note 41), 106–10.

**69** Charles D. Stanton, *Norman Naval Operations in the Mediterranean*. Warfare in History (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016), 9–66. Stanton notes the need of great quantities of water for the oarsmen of the boats, which made the river next to the port especially attractive.

**70** Although much research has been carried out on the Norman dynasty and the Kingdom of Sicily, just a few of the works will be named here, each containing a rich bibliography: Graham A. Loud, *Conquerors and Churchmen in Norman Italy*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Loud, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Alex Metcalfe, *Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily, Arabic Speakers and the End of Islam* (New York, London: Routledge, 2010); Hiroshi Takayama, *The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily*. The Medieval Mediterranean, 3 (Leiden, New York, et al.: Brill, 1993); Hubert Houben, *Roger II of Sicily, a Ruler between East and West*. Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Edmund Curtis, *Roger of Sicily and the Normans in Lower Italy, 1016–1154* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s sons, 1912, rpt. 1973); William Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom, Roger II and the Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997); Tronzo, “Regarding Norman Sicily: Art, Identity and Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages,” *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana, Kunst und Liturgie im Mittelalter* 20 (1977): 107–14. On the use of art for political ends in the Kingdom of Sicily, see Eva Borsook, *Messages in Mosaic: The Royal Programs of Norman Sicily (1130–1187)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); S. Brown, “The Political Use of the Past in Norman Sicily,” *The Perception of the Past in the Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Paul Magdalino. The Cambridge Medieval History, 5 (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), 191–210.

**71** Houben, Roger II of Sicily (see note 70), 166–75.

In the nave there are four bands of inscriptions.<sup>72</sup> Only one, which is next to the altar, has a purple background.<sup>73</sup> It states: [ANNO AB IN] CARACIO[N]E D[OMI]NI NOS[T]RI IH[ES]V CH[RISTI] M.C.L.XIII I[N] DIC[TIONE] XI REGN[ANTE] FELICIT[ER] D[OMI]NO NOSTRO W[ILLELMO] REGE MAGNIFICO ET T[RI]V[M]FATORE HVMILIS SE[RVVS] CHRISTI JONAT[HAS].

The word *triumphatore* next to the altar expresses the political propaganda of the dynasty in which religious and secular authority were combined and manifested.<sup>74</sup> William ruled in the name of Christ and, like his Lord, he was triumphant, while his archbishop declared himself at the same time as a loyal subject of Jesus and the king. Aware of the authority to which he owed allegiance, with the king controlling the Latin Church in the kingdom, Jonathas was indeed demonstrating his loyalty to the king and kingdom with this inscription. At the same time, however, he was not underestimating his own position. Next to the roundel depicting King Solomon, the wisest of all men and builder of the Temple, Archbishop Jonathas mentions, once again, his involvement in the decoration of the cathedral, thereby comparing himself to King Solomon (Fig. 11).

Demonstrating loyalty to the king was of utmost importance due to the historical events. The period of William's reign was one of disquiet and rebellion. The roots of this might lie in the reign of his father Roger II. In order to overcome the cultural differences prevailing in the kingdom and to unify it, as it was split among three continents, in Sicily, Apulia, North Africa and Antioch, and in an effort to diminish the power of other Norman barons, Roger II enacted new laws that were intended to centralize the kingdom. In 1142 he published the "Assize of Ariano," a compilation of laws that enhanced the power of the monarchy and brought the Church in the kingdom under the *custodia* of the king.<sup>75</sup> This important step in the establishment of a secular European legal system declared the king as the only person with the authority to judge and punish according to the written laws, and the only person with the right to demand taxation, as well as to declare war.<sup>76</sup> Needless to say, the other Norman barons were not very enthu-

<sup>72</sup> These inscriptions have been broadly discussed. For more on them, see Willemsen, *L'enigma di Otranto* (see note 10), 35–40.

<sup>73</sup> Purple as a royal color was highly valued by the Normans, see for example, their porphyry tombs. For more on these tombs and their material's significance, see Josef Deér, *The Dynastic Porphyry Tombs of the Norman Period in Sicily*, trans. G. A. Gillhoff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 126–65.

<sup>74</sup> On the use of art to indicate the Norman king as a ruler anointed by Providence and the political significance of this act, see Borsook, *Messages in Mosaic: The Royal Programs of Norman Sicily* (see note 69), 17–50; Ungruh, *Das Bodenmosaik* (see note 5) 189–92.

<sup>75</sup> Hubert Houben, *Roger II of Sicily* (see note 70), 98–165.

<sup>76</sup> Takayama, *The Administration* (see note 70), 47–114.

siastic about this. The result were frequent rebellions in the kingdom, the most serious of which was in 1160, when both William's powerful chancellor, Maio of Bari, and the crown prince were assassinated.<sup>77</sup> This mutiny was mercilessly crushed by William I.

There is no evidence that Otranto had participated in the attempted coup. According to Cosimo Poso, from 1155 on Otranto had abstained from battle and remained loyal to the king.<sup>78</sup> The barons might have been against the king, but the real ruler of the city was indeed the rich and powerful archbishop, who also held vast economic privileges in the port. The Latin archbishop, invested by the king, was loyal, and sought to prove it by initiating a floor mosaic, a work that began just three years after the rebellion. With this mosaic he was sending a message to the barons as well.

Perhaps in this connection one can understand the depiction of the Prophet Samuel in the south aisle, holding a scroll in his hand. In the Book of Samuel 1.10.24–25 it states: “[...] See ye him who the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people. And all the people shouted and said ‘Long live the king!’ Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord [...]” (Fig. 20).

The twelfth century in the Kingdom of Sicily saw a period of growth of scientific thought and data. Within a few decades of its establishment the Kingdom of Sicily had become a superpower in the Mediterranean,<sup>79</sup> probably the richest monarchy in Europe, and a unique cultural center in Latin Europe.<sup>80</sup> Absorbing knowledge from all the cultures in their kingdom, which was inhabited by Greeks from Byzantium, Muslims from Egypt, and quite a substantial number of Jews,<sup>81</sup> it became an intellectual center of study. Translations of classical works,

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<sup>77</sup> Norwich, *The Kingdom in the Sun* (see note 65), 167–248; Houben, Roger II of Sicily (see note 70), 166–81; Poso, “Immagine e forma urbana” (see note 41), 118; Ungruh, *Das Bodenmosaik* (see note 5), 12–18.

<sup>78</sup> Cosimo Poso, “Immagine e forma urbana” (see note 41), 118–28. Poso's evidence is a letter from Maio to several towns in Puglia, including Otranto, from which one can deduce that Otranto abstained from any fighting from the year 1155. This has been globally accepted by research.

<sup>79</sup> Stanton, *Norman Naval Operations in the Mediterranean* (see note 68).

<sup>80</sup> A vast research has been carried on the Norman dynasty and the Kingdom of Sicily (see note 69).

<sup>81</sup> Alex Metcalfe, *Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily* (see note 70), 55–113; John J. Norwich, *A Kingdom in the Sun* (see note 65), 55–70; For a description of the influence of the various cultures in the Kingdom of Sicily on different fields of life and governance, see, for example, Otto Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1988), in which he traces the Byzantine influence on the mosaics decorating churches and palaces in Sicily; Jeremy Johns, “Arabic Inscriptions in the Cappella Palatina: Performativity, Audience, Legibility and Illegibility,” *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. Antony Eastmond



**Fig. 20:** The prophet Samuel (Photo © Nurit Golan)

previously considered lost to the Latin world, were carried out from Greek and Arabic, recovering in this way many of the lost mathematical, philosophical, and literary texts of the classical world.<sup>82</sup> This was a multilingual society. At court French was spoken, but it was not alien to Latin, Arabic, Greek, Calabrian, and even Hebrew. Decrees were quite often given in more than one language.<sup>83</sup> The Sicilian chancellor, Henricus Aristippus (1105–1162), for example, in addition to his political duties, was the first to translate, already in 1160, Ptolemy's *Almagest*

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(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 124–47; Hiroshi Takayama, *The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (see note 70), in which he discusses the Muslim ruling culture and its influence on the kingdom. The part dealing with the period of William I is in pages 95–114; Vera von Falkenhausen discusses this aspect in Puglia, “Tra Occidente e Oriente” (see note 37), 13–60; here 134–39.

<sup>82</sup> On the translation movements of classical works from Greek and Arabic into Latin, see Lynn Thorndike, “Translations of Works of Galen from the Greek by Pietro d’Abano,” *Isis* 33.6 (1942): 649–53; Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, “Translations and Translators,” *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson, Giles Constable, Carol D. Lanham, and Charles H. Haskins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 435–38; Andreas Speer, “The Discovery of Nature: The Contribution of the Charterians to Twelfth Century Attempts to Found a ‘*scientia naturalis*,’” *Traditio* 52 (1997): 135–51. For a list of translated works from Arabic and Greek, see Olaf Pedersen, *Early Physics and Astronomy: A Historical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); John J. Norwich, *A Kingdom in the Sun* (see note 65); On the specific translation movement in the Norman kingdom, see Alex Metcalfe, *Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily* (see note 70), 127–87.

<sup>83</sup> As well as cosmological or medical tractates. Very often a scientific term would appear in more than one language.



(100–170 AD), the cosmological work that was to become the main textbook of this topic for the next 500 years.<sup>84</sup>

## Archbishop Jonathas and Pantaleone

Due to a lack of documentation, not much can be said about the two individuals responsible for this masterpiece. The presbyter Pantaleone, who was the artist, is considered to have come from the known Benedictine monastery, St. Nicola di Casole, which is two kilometers south of Otranto and was established in 1098.<sup>85</sup> The monastery was well supported by the Hauteville clan. This is attested to by the fact that the monks are noted as having prayed for some of the distinguished members of this family, such as the deceased wife of Bohemond I, Prince of Puglia, for Bohemond II, their son, for Elvira, King Roger II's wife, and for their son Roger, Duke of Puglia, and later for King William I himself.<sup>86</sup> This monastery had a large library, which was lost in 1480 when Otranto was conquered by the Turks. It is said to have possessed manuscripts such as by Aristoteles (not clear which ones), comedies by Aristophanes, Greek grammars, a *lipidario* (a book on the therapeutic power of stones), *oneirocriticon* by Artemidorus, which was a Greek-Byzantine book on deciphering dreams and was translated into Latin in 1160, and many more, in Greek and Latin.<sup>87</sup> Gianfreda sees in the roundel in the choir that depicts a seated monk touching a unicorn, a kind of signature signifying Pantaleone<sup>88</sup> (Fig. 21).

Archbishop Jonathas fits the intellectual profile of a highly sophisticated and erudite individual declaring his vast knowledge, no less than the presbyter and perhaps even more. The archbishop belonged to the educated Norman milieu. His connections to the courtly circles is clear from the friendly written correspondence between him and personalities from the *regalis magna curie* in Palermo.<sup>89</sup> It is possible that Jonathas was the delegate of the king in Otranto and its neighborhood. He was probably of foreign origin, like the Archbishops of Brindisi and

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<sup>84</sup> Norwich, *The Kingdom in the Sun* (see note 65), 203–04. The translation that became popular was not Aristipus's translation from Greek, but a later one by Gerard of Cremona from Arabic.

<sup>85</sup> Cesare Daquino, *Bizantini di Terra d'Otranto: San Nicola di Casole* (Lecce: Capone, 2000); Ungruh, *Das Bodenmosaik* (see note 5), 21; Falkenhausen, "Tra Occidente e Oriente" (see note 37), 51.

<sup>86</sup> Houben, "Comunità cittadina e vescovi" (see note 41), 79–80.

<sup>87</sup> The activity for which this scriptorium was famous was slightly later, in the early thirteenth century.

<sup>88</sup> Gianfreda, *Il Mosaico di Otranto* (see note 9), 116.

<sup>89</sup> Castiñeiras, *D'Alexander à Arthur* (see Note 4), 144–46.



**Figs. 21, 21a:** A priest and a unicorn (Pantaleone?) (Photos © Nurit Golan)

Syracuse, who were English. William I appointed French and English churchmen to the highest ecclesiastic positions as part of his Latinization project. The name Jonathas could be a Latinization of the name Jonathan which was clearly not a Norman name. As we have seen already, Archbishop Jonathas was the richest and most powerful man in Otranto. Otranto was the closest port to Byzantium and a very important one strategically.<sup>90</sup> It is thus not surprising that immediately after

<sup>90</sup> Castiñeiras D'Alexander à Arthur (see note 4), 145.

the rebellion (1160) he wanted to prove his loyalty to the king and at the same time send a clear message to the Pugliese barons.

A unique art was being developed in the kingdom at the time, introducing a new style that emerged from a combination of Italian, Arabic, and Byzantine styles.<sup>91</sup> Most of the buildings in Sicily were decorated with magnificent mosaics, such as the Palatine Chapel, the cathedrals of Cefalù and Monreale, and the palaces of Palermo. Perhaps this is why Archbishop Jonathas chose this particular medium as a means to declare his loyalty to the king and the kingdom.

The Otranto mosaic envisions a world of cosmological, literary, biblical, and exegetical knowledge. Artistic conventions from courtly art, as well as from other sources, were employed in an effort to achieve the sophistication of other projects in the kingdom. A good indication of Jonathas's expectations from this project can be found in the most intriguing of all the depictions: that of Atlas, the Titan, who bears the heavens on his shoulder, depicted at the top of the tree in the south aisle, as previously noted. From Hesiod to Virgil, Atlas was described as an astronomer, bearing the heavens on his shoulders and thus symbolizing cosmological and astrological knowledge. The depiction of the cosmos presents four inner circles surrounding a dark disc (Fig. 22), possibly an abstraction of the celestial spheres surrounding the earth. This depiction was created only a few years after the first translation of the *Almagest* into Latin, carried out in the Sicilian court! The *rota* Atlas is bearing is visually and artistically accentuated. This is the only part of the floor where a different mosaic technique has been used: the *Opus sectile* technique, comprising an inlay of green, white, and red/purple marble, originally probably porphyry. It is reminiscent of the floor decoration of the Palatine Chapel in Palermo, built by Roger II and decorated by his son William I.

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Every “climber” of the mosaic tree at Otranto Cathedral can potentially perceive a different road, as is clear from the research of this mosaic. This indeed seems to reflect the very characteristics of the road to wisdom. A final example is that of the four-bodied lion, the “whirl” of lions, one head and four bodies, which was considered by several earlier art historians to represent the Devil<sup>92</sup> (Fig. 23).

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<sup>91</sup> Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (see note 81); William Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom* (see note 70); Tronzo, “Regarding Norman Sicily: Art, Identity and Court Culture (see note 70).

<sup>92</sup> It is situated in the west part of the nave, not far from Alexander and his griffons. For an interpretation that perceives in this depiction satanic witchcraft and evil, see Laura Pasquiny,



**Fig. 22:** The cosmos  
(photo © Nurit Golan)



**Fig. 23:** The lion—one head and four bodies (Photo © Nurit Golan)

I would argue, rather, that it symbolizes the king himself in a positive fashion, as a lion so often symbolized royal power and was frequently attributed with this meaning in royal mosaics in Sicily.<sup>93</sup> On his sword William had these words carved: “Apulus et Calaber Siculus mihi servit et Afer.”<sup>94</sup> The four strong bodies of the lion signify the four countries that together composed the Kingdom of Sicily.

The floor depicts an unusual multi-dimensional road: up – using the metaphor of climbing up the tree, or flying up to heaven, in Alexander’s way or the righteous; down – to Hell or the Under World (see King Arthur) to the sides, to far countries real and spiritual (India, Paradise) and sea, consider the marine creatures. It also has the dimension of Time which is an integral part of the Road. The “road” of the traveler to wisdom might be physically short, but what magnificent worlds are to be discovered once it is taken. The conglomerate of ideas depicted here makes it a document attesting to the intellectual and cultural life in the kingdom. It is a monumental visual act of praise by Archbishop Jonathas, who thereby declares himself as being part of this culture.

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“Il leone quadricorpore nel mosaic pavimentale della cattedrale di Otranto,” *Atti del X Colloquio dell’Associazione Italiana per lo Studio e la conservazione del mosaico, Lecce, 18–21 febbraio*, ed. Claudia Angelelli (Tivoli, Rome: Scripta Manent, 2005), 467–78. It should be noted that in contrast to Pasquini’s examples, which are found on textiles, sculptures and a bronze bowl, in Otranto the bodies of the lion are in the shape of a cross.

**93** Animals quite often symbolized nations, as in the dream of Alexander in which an animal comes out of the sea with four heads, each of a different animal, and each was understood to present a different nation. For more on this, see Castiñeiras, “D’Alexander à Arthur” (see note 4), 141–42.

**94** William proclaims that he rules over Apulia, Calabria, Sicily and Africa.

Na'ama Shulman

# The Chronotope of Law in the *Sachsenspiegel* Illustrations: A Pictorial Travel Through the World of Law

The earliest and anonymous illustrator of the *Sachsenspiegel* (the Saxon Mirror) faced an artistic and conceptual challenge. The *Mirror* was the first written judicial manual of the customary Saxon law in vernacular German, a manual that aspired to encompass every imaginable legal situation, its procedures and outcomes, and to narrate as many historical and hypothetic cases as possible. The nature of this narration, however, is still under debate. In terms of literary genre, scholars such as Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand and Henrike Manuwald identify the sources for the *Mirror* with the *Fürstenspiegel* (mirrors for the princes), which present moral stories to guide the king or nobleman,<sup>1</sup> and with the twelfth-century ecclesiastical *Rechtboocher* – books of law.<sup>2</sup>

Identifying the sources for the text-image conjunction of the illustrated *Mirror* is far more complicated, and has respectively drawn extensive attention, due to the numerous tiny figures, gesticulating boldly with accentuated palms as they point, blame, swear, and sentence to exile and death (Fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> Already at the end

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1 *The Saxon Mirror: A Sachsenspiegel of the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Maria Dobozy. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 1, 7. Dobozy indicates only one contemporary precedent in the German milieu: that of the Mühlhäuser Reichsbuch (1223–1231). The other twelfth century source she suggests is the *Speculum ecclesiae* by Honorius Augustodunensis. On the beginnings and spread of the Saxon law, see Heiner Lück, “Aspects of the Transfer of the Saxon-Magdeburg Law to Central and Eastern Europe,” *Zeitschrift des Max-Planck-Instituts für europäische Rechtsgeschichte* 22 (2014): 79–89. For a survey of the medieval German law research, see Gerald Kohl, “Legal Historiography (German),” *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, 3 vols, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), vol. 1: 788–06. I would like to express my warm gratitude to Maria Dobozy for her comments on this paper in its penultimate draft.

2 Henrike Manuwald, “Pictorial Narrative in Legal Manuscripts? The *Sachsenspiegel* Manuscript in Wolfenbüttel,” *Word and Image* 23.3 (2007): 275–89; here 275.

3 Dietlinde Munzel-Everling, “Rechtsvisualisierung in den Bilderhandschriften des Sachsen-spiegels,” *e-Staat und e-Wirtschaft aus rechtlicher Sicht: Internationalen RechtsInformatik Symposium (IRIS) 2006* (Stuttgart, Munich, and Hannover: Richard Boorberg, 2006), 511–20; here 513–15; online at: [www.munzel-everling.de/download/munzel\\_rechtsvisualisierung.pdf](http://www.munzel-everling.de/download/munzel_rechtsvisualisierung.pdf) (last accessed on Feb. 22, 2018). See also Jean-Claude Schmitt classical article, “The Rationale of Gestures in

of the nineteenth century this vividness had encouraged scholars such as Karl von Amira, and later Hans Fehr, largely to establish the historical analysis of German medieval law upon these figures,<sup>4</sup> while the later phases of research have focused on the ongoing arguments regarding the question of narrativity that seemingly results from such a dynamic portrayal of the figures.<sup>5</sup> Michael Curschmann and Madeleine Caviness reject such narrative assumptions; Norbert Ott, in contrast,

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the West: A History from the 3rd to the 13th Centuries,” *Advances in Non-Verbal Communication: Sociocultural, Clinical, Aesthetic and Literary Perspectives*, ed. Fernando Poyatos (Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 1992), 77–95.

4 Karl von Amira, “Die Handgebärden in den Bilderhandschriften des Sachsenspiegels,” *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Philologische und Historische Klasse* 23.2 (1905): 161–263; id., *Die Dresdner Bilderhandschrift des Sachsenspiegels*, vols. 1–2 (Leipzig: Biblio, 1925–1926); Hans Fehr, *Kunst und Recht*, 3 vols. (Erlenbach-Zürich, et al.: Rentsch, 1923–1937). On Amira and the text-image interpretation, see Mathias Schmöckel, “Karl von Amira und die Anfänge der Rechtsarchäologie,” *Forschungen zur Rechtsarchäologie und rechtlichen Volkskunde*, ed. Louis Carlen (Zürich: Schulthess, 1982), 67–81; here 72–73, 77. See also Brigitte Janz, *Rechtsspruchwörter im Sachsenspiegel: Eine Untersuchung zur Text-Bild-Relation in den Codices picturati*. Germanistische Arbeiten zu Sprache und Kulturgeschichte, 13 (Frankfurt a. M., New York, and Bern: Peter Lang, 1989), 40–42; Werner Wolf, “Das Problem der Narrativität in Literatur, Bildender Kunst und Musik: Ein Beitrag zu einer intermedialen Erzähltheorie,” *Erzähltheorie transgenerisch, intermedial, interdisziplinär*, ed. Vera and Ansgar Nünning. Handbücher zum literaturwissenschaftlichen Studium, 5 (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2002), 23–04. See also Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 82–86. On narrativity and performance, see, for example, the opposite perception of the *Mirror* as history by Charles G. Nelson, who focuses on the illustrations’ performativity, “Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Reflections on the Performance of Authority in Eike von Repgow’s *Sachsenspiegel*,” *The Four Modes of Seeing: Approaches to Medieval Imagery in Honor of Madeline Harrison Caviness*, ed. Evelyn Staudinger Lane, Elizabeth Carson Pasten, and Ellen M. Shortell (Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 367–81; here 372.

5 For a general bibliography on the *Sachsenspiegel* text-image iconography and interpretation, see the anthology *Text-Bild-Interpretation: Untersuchungen zu den Bilderhandschriften des Sachsenspiegels*. Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften, 55, ed. Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, Dagmar Hüpper, and Ulrike Lade (Munich: Fink, 1986), especially Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, “Text und Bild in den Codices picturati des ‘Sachsenspiegels’: Überlegungen zur Funktion der Illustration,” 11–31, and Norbert H. Ott, “Vorläufige Bemerkungen zur Sachsenspiegel-Ikonographie,” 38–42; Gernot Kocher, *Zeichen und Symbole des Rechts: Eine historische Ikonographie* (Munich: Beck, 1992); Moriss L. Cohen, *Law: The Art of Justice* (New York: Lauter Levin, 1992); Andreas Bauer, “Das Recht im Bild,” *Kloster und Bildung im Mittelalter: Gemeinsame Tagung des Klosters Ebstorf und des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte*, ed. Nathalie Kruppa and Jürgen Wilke. Germania Sacra, vom 17. – 21. März 2004 im Kloster Ebstorf (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2006), 263–300; here 265–66; *AusBILDung des Rechts: Systematisierung und Vermittlung von Wissen in mittelalterlichen Rechtshandschriften*, ed. Kristin Böse, and Susanne Wittekind. (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2009), esp. Henrike Manuwald’s paper, “Narrative Bilder in Rechtshandschriften: Zu den *Codices picturati* des *Sachsenspiegel*,” 168–96.

reads the performance of the figures as if indeed narrated, established on the imagery and iconography of courtly literature, arguing that their bare structuring shares the same meaning.<sup>6</sup>

Kathryn Starkey similarly anchors the *Mirror* imagery in a corpus of contemporary German illustrations, such as those of *Willehalm* by Wolfram von Eschenbach (ca. 1220), which demonstrate a similarly schematic juxtaposition of active figures and elements. The concise narrative formulas of the *Willehalm*, *Sächsische Weltchronik*, and the *Welsche Gast* manuscripts may indeed be considered a stylistic source for the *Mirror* illustrations; however, as I will demonstrate later, the *Mirror* imagery serves an abstract visualization of law rather than its narrativity.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike the mirrors for princes, which employ rather familiar historical and biblical episodes, the new judicial ones are hypothetical and incomplete. Any given legal state or crisis can develop in various ways and, accordingly, the Christian moral ending of the traditional narrative is replaced by potentiality, as each case generates several following fragmentary endings, or judicial “micro-narratives,” as Manuwald termed them, suggesting a medial form situated between narration and abstraction.<sup>8</sup>

This technique of split and categorized sequences of events removes the legal case from the fictive realm of literary or historical narrative, and offers a type of encyclopedic writing, dividing the natural world into categories and sub-categories, as presented in the bestiaries and in the botanical, astronomic, and

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<sup>6</sup> While Curschmann, like Caviness, argues for a meaningful difference between the text and the performative nature of the illustrations, I intend to show that the illustrations function as emblems of the law. Michael Curschmann, “Picture laicorum literature? Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Bild und volkssprachlicher Schriftlichkeit im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter bis zum Codex Manesse,” *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit im Mittelalter: Erscheinungsformen und Entwicklungsstufen*, ed. Hagen Keller, Klaus Grubmüller, and Nikolaus Staubach. Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums, 17. – 19. Mai 1989 (Munich: Fink, 1992), 211–29; here 227; Madeline H. Caviness, “‘Giving’ the Middle Ages a Bad Name: Blood Punishments in the Sachsenspiegel and Town Law Books,” *Studies in Iconography* 34 (2013): 175–235; here 177; Norbert H. Ott, “Die Wahrheit der Schrift im Bild,” *Geschichten Sehen, Bilder, Hören Bildprogramme im Mittelalter: Akten der Tagung Bamberg 2013*, ed. Andrea Schindler and Evelyn Meyer (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2013), 9–34; here, 17, 20.

<sup>7</sup> The *Welsche Gast* by Thomasin von Zerclaere is an exception in this regard, formed as a manual of manners and could indeed be analyzed as a “map of manners,” a task beyond the scope of this article. On the stylistic, iconographic, and even semiotic similarity between the *Welche Gast* and the *Mirror*, see Norbert Ott, “Vorläufige Bemerkungen zur ‘Sachsenspiegel’-Ikonographie” (see note 5), 36–38. See also Kathryn Starkey, *Reading the Medieval Book: Word, Image, and Performance in Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Willehalm* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 7, 100–01, 146; Friedrich Neumann and Ewald Vetter, *Zucht und schöne Sitte: Eine Tugendlehre der Stauferzeit* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> Manuwald, “Pictorial Narrative” (see note 2), 281.



medical treatises. However, the sub-categories of the natural world of phenomena are finite, with the characteristics of each plant or animal being fixed; whereas a legal case, even when divided into categories, reflects a specific development and changes. Thus, the anonymous illustrators not only had to create a visual classification of the law, but also to demonstrate its potential range of changes.<sup>9</sup>

The *Mirror*'s illustrations to date have been explored mostly in terms of performance, narrativity, artistic style, and as evidence of corporeal practices of the law. Studies of the *Mirror*'s imagery have been incorporated in anthologies dedicated to text-image relations and medieval visualization of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, while scholars have acknowledged the common cultural climate shared by the *Mirror*, contemporary encyclopedias, diagrams, and maps, no one has yet discussed the manner in which the visual strategy of the *Mirror*'s illustrations reflects its purpose as a guide to acquiring knowledge. Unlike the solid information found in the encyclopedia and chronicle, the *Mirror*, focusing on potential events, directs its readers in the delicate art of decision making.

Searching for the visual pattern through which the illustrated *Mirror* embodies the theoretical coexistence of hypothetical possibilities, the viewer first encounters vertical columns of images. Linear compositions appear to outline linear courses of happenings; one would perhaps imagine a different layout, such as a tree-form scheme or a map-diagram would better visualize the notion of multiple feasible paths. In addition, the spatial design of the specific scenes themselves is feeble: though the *Mirror* includes more than several geographical notations, and mentions time periods and actual distances relevant for the management of judicial procedure, depth and background are absent from the *Mirror* imagery (excluding a few interiors). Geographical landmarks, castles, and cities are signified rather than depicted; the portrayal of actual territories, related to the legal process, is largely omitted; and the figures are constantly adjacent,

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<sup>9</sup> On the tensions and relations between the images of medieval informative genres (Chronicles, Encyclopedias, maps), see Alfred Hiatt, "Words in Books," *Taxonomies of Knowledge: Information and Order in Medieval Manuscripts*, ed. Emily Steiner and Lynn Ransom (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 37–54; here 37–45.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, some of these main anthologies: *Text und Bild: Aspekte des Zusammenwirkens zweier Künste in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Christel Meier and Uwe Ruberg (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1980); *Gutenberg und die neue Welt*, ed. Horst Wenzel (Munich: Fink, 1994); *Alles was Recht war: Rechtliteratur und literarisches Recht: Festschrift für Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hans Höfinghoff et al. (Essen: Item, 1996); *Kloster und Bildung; Geschichten Sehen, Bilder, Hören; Das Bürger Landrecht und sein rechtshistorisches Umfeld; Zur Geschichte der Landrechte und ihrer Symbolik im Mittelalter von Rügen bis Niederösterreich*, ed. Dieter Pötschke, Gerhard Lingelbach, and Bernd Feicke. Harz-Verein für Geschichte und Altertumskunde e.V., 30 (Berlin and Wernigerode: Lukas, 2014).

though in many cases they could be located in completely different areas and even periods. This brings to mind a minimalistic theater decoration, which forces the spectator to complete a fictional world in his/her thought.

Surprisingly, a similar articulation of images, places, and even non-spatial spaces exists in another text-image guiding genre – that of cartography. In setting numerous possible roads before the traveler, maps, much like the *Mirror* manuscripts, portray emblems and symbols of lands and sites, which transfer the actual world beyond reach into a small scale image.

Both the maps and the *Mirror* illustrations aimed to guide the reader and viewer in choosing the optimal path, while presenting multiple options simultaneously. Moreover, these manuals assist a person to plan and even impact future events. Such trust in the human capability may mark a turn in the medieval self-perception, enhancing the place given to human knowledge and abilities to act within the world of God. From this point of view, I wish to explore the aesthetics of medieval roads of thinking, learning, and remembering, as they reflect in the *Mirror* illusive articulations of space and time.<sup>11</sup>

In this article I contend that the new visual genre of the *Mirror* imagery enabled a civil *meditatio*, and that as such, it concludes in numerous possible “redemptions” by which the jurist can complete the judicial procedure and maintain the status quo. Focusing on the *Mirror*’s imagery of the fourteenth century, I perceive the illustrations as semantically and structurally established upon the two medieval modes of diagram: the circular one, representing the world, and the vertical column, employed as a mnemonic device. I further suggest that this new mode of visual articulation offers the flexible form of an informative diagram, by which to instruct the jurist. The first part of this study focuses on the false impression of narrative created by these images and on their symbolic inner articulation. In the second part I attribute this symbolic articulation to the medieval cartographic design of the *Mirror* in a similar fashion to that of the *mappamundi*, the image of the world. The *Mirror*, much like the map, presents the viewer with a guide to the numerous historical, geographical, and political options, merging contemporary infrastructures with biblical and historical themes. A micro-observation of the strip-organization of these schematic illustrations, on the other hand, indicates an inspiration derived from mnemonic devices and established as vertical columns of signs, an aspect discussed in the third and last part. Finally, I will show that the cartographic and mnemonic forms of these illustrations together create a fictive chronotope, to use Michael Bakhtin’s term: a world in which the

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<sup>11</sup> See also the contribution to this volume by Nurit Golan, who similarly argues that the fresco floor in the cathedral of Otranto has to be read as a mental map through God’s creation and human history.

abstract law takes on an actual form via the illusion of time and space. As we will realize, although the *Mirror* represents a law book, the reader or viewer was supposed to find his/her way through the maze of legal cases like on a map, and to move from case to case, which suddenly transforms the reading of the stipulations and regulations into a visual travel through the world of medieval society.<sup>12</sup>

The Saxon *Mirror* was compiled between 1220 and 1235 by Eike von Repgow, a nobleman and a jurist of the lowest rank, for Count Hoyer of Falkenstein.<sup>13</sup> This was the first time that the German customary and canon law, which differed from region to region, had been collated into a written manual; his text was accepted as a practical manual almost immediately, soon to be rewritten in Latin and thereafter in other European languages.<sup>14</sup> Eike's text is divided into two parts: the *Landrecht* (territorial law) and the *Lehnrecht* (feudal law, including criminal law).<sup>15</sup> It also incorporates a massive presence of *Stadtrecht* (town law), pertaining to the rising burgher class.<sup>16</sup> Beyond the formalization and systematization, the *Mirror* reflects a revolutionary conception of law: the dominance of the Germanic tradition of *Judicium Dei* (The Judgment of God) relying on divine omens supplied by the tortures of ordeal, was slowly decreasing. Judicial responsibility became the purview of human intellectual and logical judgment, rather than that of God.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See the contribution to this volume by Jiří Koten; and see also the introduction to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

<sup>13</sup> On the civil and judicial background for the compilation of the *Sachsenspiegel*, as well as on its possible patrons, Peter Landau, "Der Entstehungsort des Sachsenspiegels: Eike von Repgow, Altzelle und die anglo-normannische Kanonistik," *Deutsches Archiv zur Erforschung des Mittelalters* 61 (2005): 73–101; Klaus Richter, "Rechtsbücher: Sachsenspiegel und Schwabenspiegel," *Kultur- und rechtshistorische Wurzeln Europas*, ed. Jörg Wolff (Munich: Forum Verlag Godesberg, 2005), 122–32.

<sup>14</sup> Nils Jansen, *The Making of Legal Authority: Non-Legislative Codifications in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 24.

<sup>15</sup> Dobozy, *The Saxon Mirror* (see note 1), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Lück emphasizes the part of town law in this text, as the *Handfeste* – the manuscripts of laws – were in common use in the German-speaking cities and beyond. Lück, "Aspects of the Transfer" (see note 1), 81.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 7–11; James Q. Whitman, *The Origins of Reasonable Doubt: Theological Roots of the Criminal Trial* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 84–90; see also Sarah Neumann on the history and fading of dual in medieval Europe, *Der gerichtliche Zweikampf: Gottesurteil – Wettstreit – Ehrensache*. Reihe: Mittelalter-Forschungen, 31 (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2010); and Vicki L. Ziegler on the ordeal, *Trial by Fire and Battle in Medieval German Literature*. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004). The transformation from ordeal to Roman law and the employment of legal investigation was a slow process that began at the end of the eleventh century, and during the thirteenth century the practice of *Judicium Dei* was formally forbidden by Emperor Friedrich II and by the Pope

When searching for precedents for a specific case, the jurist had first to identify the legal category to which the case could belong, and thus necessarily conducted an encyclopedic-like quick-search in order to find a case of a similar criminal classification. Such legal “taxonomy” can be divided into “families” or categories, such as “theft,” “murder,” or “blasphemy,” with each category and sub-category relating to diverse situations of the crime. Taking “theft” as an example, this can develop in several ways: the thief can use violence or not; get caught with the stolen property or without it; confess his crime, deny it, or excuse it. Accordingly, the *Mirror* supplies some of the possibilities and conditions for each case.<sup>18</sup> The illustrator would have needed to cope not only with the presentation of an hypothetical case, but also with the representation of split and broken narratives, while visually demonstrating too their assignment to a particular category.

The complexity of visualizing the law is reflected in the four surviving illustrated manuscripts, located in Dresden (illustrated between 1295 and 1363, DS), Heidelberg (ca. 1300, HS), Oldenburg (1336, OS), and Wolfenbüttel (1348–1371, WS).<sup>19</sup> Despite the changes and adaptations the *Mirror*’s text had undergone shortly after its compilation, these manuscripts are highly similar and, respectively, the illustrations are almost synoptic. Though dated to the early fourteenth century, the *Heidelberger Sachsenspiegel*, considered to be the earliest, is known to have an early thirteenth-century source, now lost. In other words, the artistic infrastructure behind the formulation of the *Mirror* illustrations appears to have been established during Eike’s period, in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, as supported by evidence derived from contemporary German Gothic sculpture.<sup>20</sup> I will demonstrate the *Mirror*’s chronotope, namely the

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(following its prohibition at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215). The ordeal, however, was too popular to be immediately abandoned, and the *Mirror* is rich in texts and illustrations portraying it. Nevertheless, the achievement of the *Mirror* lies in its very compilation – with the ordeal now being presented as subjected to the judicial procedure.

**18** Dobozy, *The Saxon Mirror* (see note 1), 9–10. Eike turns to his readers and asks them to contribute the missing cases that he could not encompass in his treatise.

**19** The facsimile copies of all four manuscripts are now available online following the digitalization project conducted in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel and Fachhochschule Braunschweig/ Wolfenbüttel. Online [www.hab.de/de/home/wissenschaft/forschungsprofil-und-projekte/sachsenspiegel-online.html](http://www.hab.de/de/home/wissenschaft/forschungsprofil-und-projekte/sachsenspiegel-online.html) (last accessed on Feb. 22, 2018).

**20** The “one anonymous source” hypothesis is posited by von Amira and reaffirmed by Schmidt-Wiegand, both of whom date this prototype manuscript to the end of the thirteenth century. However, Jung demonstrated in 2008 the fully-developed and elaborate compositions of Saxon law in the Naumburg small-scale Gothic sculptures, dated to the mid-thirteenth century, which indicate a fully developed iconography of law at an earlier stage. Karl von Amira, “Die Genealogie der Bilderhandschriften des Sachsenspiegels,” *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Philologische und Historische Klasse* 22.6 (1902): 327–85; here 383–85;

spatio-temporal aspects that generated the realm of law, through both the latest and most elaborate mid-fourteenth century *Wolfenbütteler Sachsenspiegel* (WS), and the oldest *Heidelberger Sachsenspiegel* (HS), which displays the initial and simplistic design of the episodes depicted in the WS.

While Starkey's examples from the courtly literature images seem to share stylistic features, their psychological aspects and spatio-temporal nature are completely different, since in many cases the figures embodying the states of law express no actual emotions or relationships but, rather, abstract legal positions. In some of the scenes, two figures may seem to be related by means of posture, gesture and gaze, while representing two legally or historically related entities that are actually located at a great distance from one another: a lord and his vassal may reside in two different places, with the pictorial seemingly close "relationship" between them simply indicating their feudal ties.<sup>21</sup>

Orders and procedures of customary law were conveyed by body language that could be observed from a distance, not only due to medieval illiteracy but also because visible gestures served to ensure public validation.<sup>22</sup> Recent mathematical analysis of the judicial language of gestures has revealed that the palms of the hands functioned as pointers and symbols, to be read as words in the language of law.<sup>23</sup> These encoded images instruct the reader of the text through decorated bold letters – repeated in the initials of the relevant paragraphs. Each such miniature scene thus creates a hieroglyph: a group of symbols that bears an

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Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, "Die niederdeutsche Stammhandschrift der Bilderhandschriften des Sachsenspiegels," *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung* 116 (1993): 1–27; Jacqueline E. Jung, "The Passion, the Jews, and the Crisis of the Individual on the Naumburg West Choir Screen," *Beyond the Yellow Badge: Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Medieval and Early Modern Visual Culture*, ed. Mitchell B. Merback. Brill's Series in Jewish Studies, 37 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 145–77.

<sup>21</sup> See for example Fig. 11 and its related discussion.

<sup>22</sup> On performance in customary law see for example Joachim Rückert, "Kommentar zur Sektion "Symbolische Kommunikation im Recht des Mittelalters," *Alles nur symbolisch?: Bilanz und Perspektiven der Erforschung symbolischer Kommunikation*, ed. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Tim Neu, and Christina Brauner (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2013), 130–39; and also Ester Cohen, *The Crossroads of Justice: Law and Culture in Late Medieval France*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 36 (New York: Brill, 1993), 9, 54–55, 61–62; Kiril Petkov: *The Kiss of Peace: Ritual, Self, and Society in the High and Late Medieval West*. Cultures, Beliefs and Traditions, 17 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 88–93, 101–02.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Bell, et.al., "Nonverbal Communication in Medieval Illustrations Revisited by Computer Vision and Art History," *Visual Resources* 29.1–2 (2013): 26–37; The project "Computer-Assisted Detection and Analysis of Medieval Legal Gestures" conducted at Heidelberg university is currently developing an algorithm to recognize the legal meanings of gestures, their frequency and context: <https://hciweb.iwr.uni-heidelberg.de/compvis/research/gestures/> (last accessed on Feb. 22, 2018).

autonomous meaning, changing and specified according to their combination.<sup>24</sup> Here I shift focus from body language studies and concentrate on the composition of these hieroglyphs, and on its subjection not to the specific case but, rather, to the overall visual structure of the *Mirror*.

These semi-abstract non-narratives are nonetheless featured in the *Mirror*'s overall chronological framework of world history. The first folio in the WS presents the Original Sin, with Eike's figure offering his book to past emperors (Fig. 1); it ends with a second presentation of Eike lying under his book, from which emerges Christ, implying his Second Coming that precedes the Last Judgment (Fig. 2).<sup>25</sup> In this sense, the *Mirror* fulfills its function as an *Imago mundi* of law. An important theoretical discussion in regard to such a visually imagined world was introduced by Walter Ong, whose 1959 term "allegorical tableau" refers to such visual worlds containing fragmented or isolated narratives. Ong perceived them as "a type of graphic representation ... (in which) the governing principles may be considered to be a more or less naturalistic pictorial representation on the one hand, and on the other some kind of organization in space which is not naturalistic but artificial, schematic, or diagram."<sup>26</sup>

While the richly illustrated manuscripts of the *Mirror* may seem estranged from the simplistic, single-page image of the ordinary diagram, the diagrammatic design is in fact a primary device of Christian art, and was especially so in the age of scholasticism.<sup>27</sup> Diagram is one of the most useful forms by which to summarize knowledge, to memorize it, and to visualize abstract concepts. The diagrammatic imagery, however, required a different form of literacy from the viewer – the ability to read schemes and to arrive at beneficial conclusions,<sup>28</sup> similarly to the educated viewer when interpreting the complex Gothic facades, on which the figures are subjected to hierarchic and symbolic layout. Indeed, the clarity of the

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<sup>24</sup> Barbara Tversky, "Spatial Schemas in Depictions," *Spatial Schemas and Abstract Thought*, ed. Merideth Gattis (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001), 79–111, here 86, 94.

<sup>25</sup> The exact same scenes and compositions appear in the DS.

<sup>26</sup> Walter J. Ong, "From Allegory to Diagram in the Renaissance Mind: A Study in the Significance of the Allegorical Tableau," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 17.4 (1959): 423–40; here 425. Ong, however, discusses the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in a period when the diagrammatic nature of these visual constructions had become transparent.

<sup>27</sup> See Nurit Golan's paper in this volume, and my discussion below. On the diagrammatic organization of the Gothic sculptural program, see Erwin Panofsky's classic work, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957).

<sup>28</sup> Ildar Garipzanov, "The Rise of Graphicacy in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," *Viator* 46.2 (2015): 1–21; here 6; Eric M. Ramírez-Weaver, "William of Conches, Philosophical Continuous Narration, and the Limited Worlds of Medieval Diagrams," *Studies in Iconography* 30 (2009): 1–41; here 10–11.



**Fig. 1:** *Sachsenspiegel* (the Saxon Mirror), ca. 1348–1371, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, MS Cod. Guelf 3.1 Aug. 2<sup>o</sup> f. 9v: Eike Kneels before the Emperors Constantine and Charlemagne, the sword of Justice, Creation of Adam, the Original Sin. WS images courtesy of Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel.

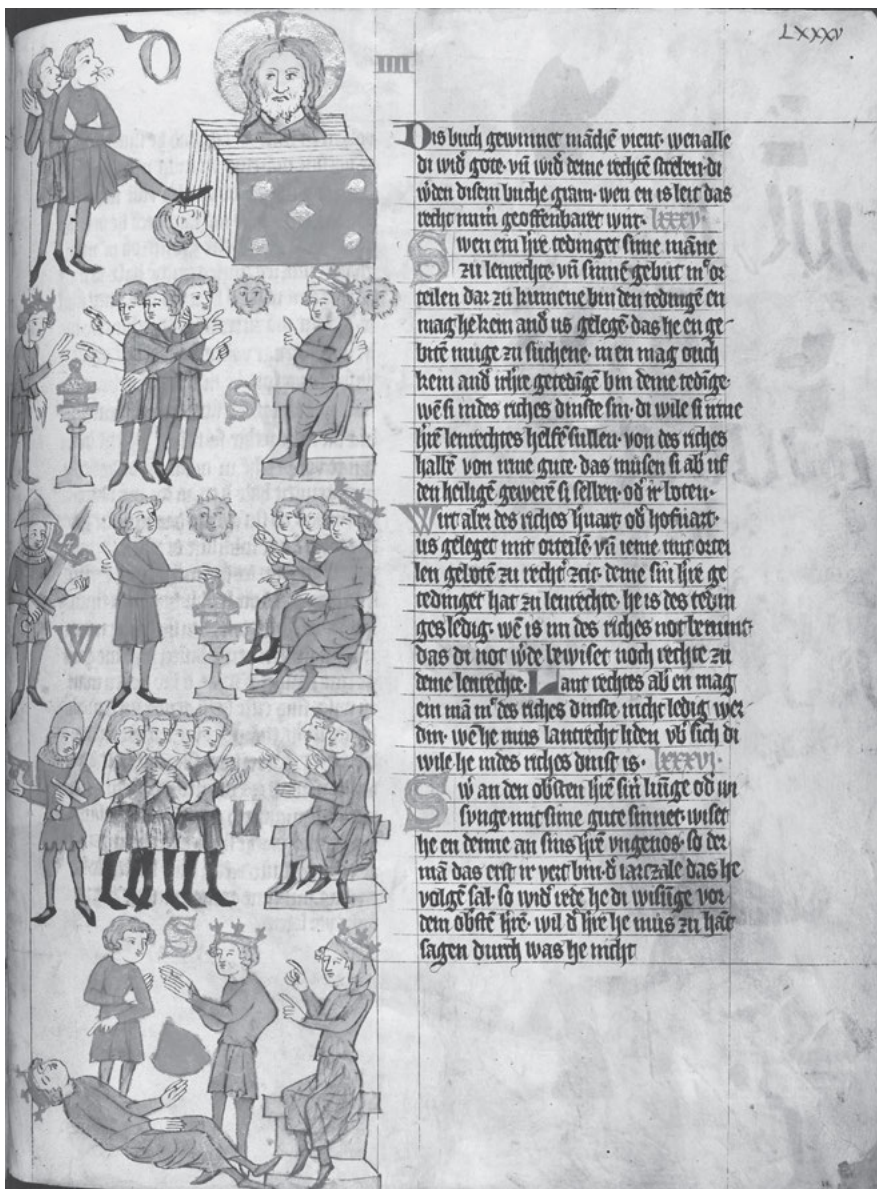


Fig. 2: WS, fol. 85r.



Carolingian and Ottonian geometric diagrams was abandoned in the later Middle Ages, in favor of elaborate compositions in which the diagram was placed within a detailed image.<sup>29</sup>

Considering the tension between abstraction and actualization, the fragmented narrative and the layers of biblical and historical information, the *Mirror's* diagrammatic roots have so far gone unnoticed, having no clear visual equivalent. In Eike's lifetime, the primary genre established on such a half-disguised diagram, presenting potential pathways, fragmented events, and historical emblems, incorporating text and image, was that of the *mappaemundi* – the maps of the world.

## ***Mappaemundi* and the Multi-Layered Image**

In order to trace similar abstractions of time and space in the *Mirror* and the map, I shall specifically focus on the Ebstorf *mappamundi*.<sup>30</sup> Its original copy is dated to the second quarter of the thirteenth century, and is assumed to be the work of the nuns in Lüneburg Convent in Lower Saxony,<sup>31</sup> homeland of the *Mirror's*

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**29** On the development of early Christian diagrams into late medieval ones see especially Bianca Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things: Science and Eschatology in Early Medieval Art* (Regensburg: Schnell + Steiner, 2003); Simona Cohen, *Transformations of Time and Temporality in Medieval and Renaissance Art*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 228 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 53–79; Jeffrey Hamburger, "Haec Figura Demonstrat: Diagrams in an Early Thirteenth Century Parisian Copy of Lothar de Segni's *De Missarum Mysteriis*," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 58 (2009): 7–75.

**30** On the history of the *mappaemundi* from the simplistic diagrams of the early Christianity and up to the pictorial, large-size maps of the late Middle Ages, see William Latham Bevan and Henry Wright Phillott, *Mediaeval Geography: An Essay in Illustration of the Hereford Mappa Mundi* (London: E. Stanford, 1873); Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers viewed their World* (London: British Library, 1999); Naomi Reed Kline, *Maps of Medieval Thought: The Hereford Paradigm* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001).

**31** The Ebstorf map creators are still under debate. It was first attributed to an anonymous, then to Gervase of Tilbury (in this case the map is dated to either 1214–1215 or after 1231), and his possible influence on the nuns at the Lüneburg convent. While the hypothesis according to which Gervase created an *imago mundi* is fitting to the politics of Otto IV, and hereby to my dating it as belonging to the early thirteenth century, the question of authorship is beyond the scope of this article, which focuses on general visual structures in the Saxon territories. For only a small part of the vast discussion on the authors of the map, see Hartmut Kugler's discussion in the footnotes to his main thesis in "Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte: Ein europäisches Weltbild im deutschen Mittelalter," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 116.1 (1987): 1–29; cf. also Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae: Die Enden der Erde und der vierte Kontinent auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica 36 (Hanover: Hahn, 1992), 91–92;



**Fig. 3:** The Ebstorf mappaemundi, ca. 1300 (original copy: second quarter of the thirteenth century), destroyed in 1943. Photo: courtesy of Landschaftsmuseum Westerwald.

author, Eike (Fig. 3).<sup>32</sup> The Ebstorf map is perhaps one of the more monumental and detailed *mappaemundi*, 3.7 m in diameter, and also includes a detailed

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Jürgen Wilke, *Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte*. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Historische Landesforschung der Universität Göttingen, 39 (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2001), 173–84; and especially Armin Wolf, “The Ebstorf Mappaemundi and Gervase of Tilbury: The Controversy Revisited,” *Imago Mundi: The International Journal for the History of Cartography* 64.1 (2012): 1–27. <sup>32</sup> For a detailed description of the various locations in the map, see the interactive website of Lüneburg University: <http://www.uni-lueneburg.de/hyperimage/EbsKart/start.html> (last accessed on Feb. 22, 2018).

glossary.<sup>33</sup> Scholars such as Hartmut Kugler, Marcia Kupfer, and Armin Wolf have suggested that it is equally a visualization of encyclopedic knowledge, as its glossary incorporates the story of the creation of the world, mythological references and a bestiary, as well as a miniature basic map in the shape of an OT diagram (*orbis terrarum*: T inside an O form), dividing the world into three continents, which reads as a key to the map as a whole.<sup>34</sup>

The vast majority of the *mappaemundi* are part of geographic texts and illustrations for them.<sup>35</sup> The cartographic research identifies several early twelfth-century sources for the *mappaemundi*: Honorius Augustodunensis's text, *Imago Mundi*, which includes an ekphrasis of a world map, from Paradise in the east, through Europe and Asia, and finally the Mediterranean area, and which mentions specific towns, rivers, and other landmarks; Hugh of St. Victor's *De arca Noë mistyca*, portraying a spatio-temporal progress from east to west as a basis for "contemplative life"; and Lambert of St. Omer's *Liber Floridus*, in which the Six Ages of Man are paralleled to the geographical spans of the world.<sup>36</sup>

Medieval *mappaemundi* relate to multiple functions and agendas that greatly differ from those we attribute to modern maps today. A *mappamundi* such as the Ebstorf map was first and foremost a scholarly device.<sup>37</sup> If we compare a modern mapping of Europe with that seen in the Ebstorf map, it appears minimized

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33 On the text-image relationship in the Ebstorf map, see: Hartmut Kugler, "Imago Mundi: Kartographische Skizze und literarische Beschreibung," *Mediävistische Komparatistik. Festschrift für Franz Joseph Worstbrock zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Wolfgang Harms and Jan-Dirk Müller (Stuttgart: Hirzel, 1997), 77–93; here 83; Winfried Nöth, "Die Karte und ihre Territorien in der Geschichte der Kartographie," *Text – Bild – Karte. Kartographien der Vormoderne*, ed. Jürg Glauser and Christian Kiening. Reihe Litterae, 105 (Freiburg i. Br.: Rombach, 2007), 39–68, here 60–65; Ingrid Baumgärtner, "Graphische Gestalt und Signifikanz: Europa in den Weltkarten des Beatus von Liébana und des Ranulf Higden," *Europa im Weltbild des Mittelalters: Kartographische Konzepte*, ed. Ingrid Baumgärtner and Hartmut Kugler. *Orbis mediaevalis: Vorstellungswelten des Mittelalters*, 10 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 81–132.

34 Kugler, "Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte" (see note 31), 9–10, 13; Marcia Kupfer, "Medieval World Maps: Embedded Images, Interpretive Frames," *Word and Image* 10.3 (1994): 262–88; here 272. Wolf, "The Ebstorf Mappamundi" (see note 31), 1–27.

35 David Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi," *The History of Cartography: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. John B. Harley and David Woodward. *The History of Cartography*, 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 286; Bettina Schöller, "Transfer of Knowledge: Mappae Mundi Between Texts and Images," *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 4.1 (2013): 42–55.

36 See for example Kupfer, "Medieval World Maps" (see note 34), 269; Alessandro Scafi, "Mapping the End: The Apocalypse in Medieval Cartography," *Literature and Theology* 26.4 (2012): 400–16; here 408.

37 Kupfer, "Medieval World Maps" (see note 34), 263–65; Schöller, "Transfer of Knowledge" (see note 35), 48.

against the other parts of the world. In addition, the western section of the map is bordered alternately by German and Irish locations, with Sicily and Italy indeed “beneath” Germany but also attached to Jerusalem in the center; and though several mythical Greek sites are located between them, others appear on the German northern border. Only Vienna separates the Holy Roman Empire from the Mongol territories, a visualization of one of the worst military threats to the German-speaking territories during the thirteenth century (Fig. 6). Similarly, several places on the map are disproportionally enlarged. The very small island of Reichenau, being an important political and administrative center since the Ottonian dynasty, occupies the same space on the map as that of Rome, and almost the same space as that of Sicily. The Guelf Palace at Braunschweig (Brunswick) is likewise emphasized and depicted with a giant lion, in a similar fashion to the she-wolf, positioned on top of the wall of Rome.<sup>38</sup> The map thus presents a mythical, political, and cosmogonic geography interwoven into the actual one, reflecting a cultural context and agenda of the map’s creators, and one that enhances the dominance of the Holy Roman Empire in the world.<sup>39</sup>

The geographical expanse was not only topographical and fixed, but also chronological: each meaningful site was the place of historical events, often conveyed in words and emblematic images, coexisting in the past and the present.<sup>40</sup> The Ebstorf map in fact incorporates three time-frames: the Christian cosmology and world history, which Hartmut Kugler outlines from east to west, beginning with Christ’s head on top and Paradise – *ante legem* – located in India below (Fig. 4); continuing with Jerusalem in the middle, representing *sub lege*, the age of law (Fig. 5); and featuring the West at the bottom, near Christ’s feet, as *sub gratia* – the age of grace (Fig. 6).<sup>41</sup> This general axis of the three ages of law also presents a more specific treatment of the actual period of the map’s production. The contemporary German-speaking territories are specifically detailed, showing Hildesheim, Lüneberg (in which the map was created), and other cities identified with the Guelph King Otto IV’s regime, as well as his palace at Braunschweig (Brunswick). This clear Guelph propaganda suggests that the latest known copy of

38 Martin Warnke, “Et mundus hoc est homo,” *Kulturinformatik*: Schriften 1997 bis 2007 (2008), 52. <http://opus.uni-lueneburg.de/opus/volltexte/2009/14174/pdf/Kulturinformatik.pdf> (last accessed on Feb. 22, 2018).

39 Alessandro Scafi, *Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth* (London: British Library, 2006), 28.

40 Estella A. Ciobanu, *The Spectacle of the Body in Late Medieval England* (Iasi, Romania: Editura Lumen, 2012), 146, note 126.

41 On the *mappamundi* as cosmology see also Kupfer, “Medieval World Maps” (see note 34), 296; Christine Ungruh, “Paradies und *vera icon*: Kriterien für die Bildkomposition der Ebstorfer Weltkarte,” *Kloster und Bildung* (see note 5), 301–29; here 314–15.

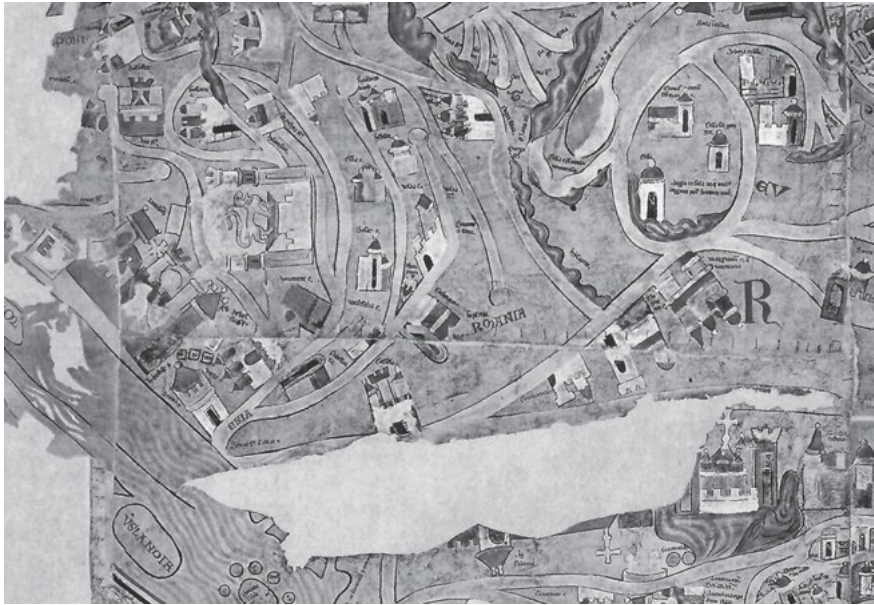


Fig. 4: The Ebstorf map, detail from Fig. 3: East, Eden, Oracle of sun and moon.



Fig. 5: The Ebstorf map, detail from Fig. 3: Jerusalem.





**Fig. 6:** The Ebstorf map, detail from Fig. 3: the German-speaking territories (clockwise): to the left: Lüneburg Convent near the northern see (?), The Palace of Braunschweig (with the lion figure), above: Goslar and Halberstadt, to the right: the island of Reichenau, below: Worms, Mainz, and Koblenz. Aachen at the bottom.

the map (the original was destroyed in WWII) was a fourteenth century copy of an earlier map, dated to the first quarter of the thirteenth century in the periods overlapping the reign of Otto VI von Braunschweig.<sup>42</sup> The Saxon territories, located in the “age of grace” indicate Otto IV’s reign as part of the fixed world image, identifying his relatively short and problematic reign as the golden age of the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>43</sup> Finally, the Ebstorf map displays the legendary stations of the *Alexanderroman*, such as the Amazonian kingdom, Babylon, and Carthage.<sup>44</sup>

In other words, the classical, Christian, and contemporary chronologies are merged in one map, generating a flexible structure of space and time, combining the actual places with their memory. These temporal webs recreate a geographical form of the Augustinian notion of *saeculum*, defined in *De civitate Dei* as the

<sup>42</sup> Armin Wolf, “Kriterien zur Datierung der Ebstorfer Weltkarte,” *Kloster und Bildung* (see note 5), 425–69; here 432–35. While the map clearly demonstrates a Guelph perspective, the city banner on top of the palace of Braunschweig indicates a date later than 1231.

<sup>43</sup> David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (London: Lane, 1988), 127.

<sup>44</sup> Kugler, “Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte” (see note 31), 20–24.

unifying of the human condition with the grace of God – the end of time.<sup>45</sup> *Saeculum*, according to Burcht Pranger, refers to the holy site as an idea, a locus, and history – a conceptual complexity shared by the imagined realities of the maps and of the abstract, visualized Saxon law. Indeed, the ambiguity of the *mappaemundi* as an image was acknowledged by their creators, declaring that such maps should be carefully observed, text and image considered simultaneously, as “what becomes real by the painters does not reflect an actual picture, and therefore should be considered with great caution.”<sup>46</sup> The *Mirror*, in contrast, was designed as a practical guide. Moreover, although one could attribute a contemplative process to the judge seeking to identify the proper judicial procedure in the *Mirror*, the target of such contemplation is different, focusing on the mundane well-being of people rather than on ascending and assimilating in God.

While the geography of the map maintains the basic geographical proportions of the then known world, the spatio-temporal construction of the *Mirror*’s imagery cannot be equally assessed as the crowded articulation and presentation of the figures hardly reveal indications of short and long periods and spaces.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, I propose to use Michael Bakhtin’s term – chronotope – as a mediating term in discussing these time-space formations. The chronotope is an “intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships”<sup>48</sup> namely, the artistic design of time and space to create an homogenous fictive reality of the specific artwork. Defining the chronotope of the textual realm, Bakhtin related to the fictive space as “an artistically valid inner spatial form ... [of the] object of aesthetic vision.”<sup>49</sup> This “inner spatial form” is no less relevant to the map and to the illustrated

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45 M. Burcht Pranger, “Medieval Ethics and the Illusion of Interiority: Augustine, Anselm, Abelard,” *Virtue and Ethics in the Twelfth Century*. ed Istán P. Bejczy and Richard G. Newhauser. Brill Studies in Intellectual History, 130 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 13–33; here 13, 22; Kupfer, “Medieval World Maps” (see note 34), 265.

46 “Ouod vero per pictores non vicietur picture, magna est cautio adhibenda.” The text of Paulinus Minorita on the *mappamundi* is quoted by Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken in “... ut describeretur totus orbis. Zur Universalkartographie des Mittelalters,” *Methoden in Wissenschaft und Kunst des Mittelalters*, ed. Albert Zimmermann and Rudolf Hoffman. Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 7 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), 249–78, here 261. This famous phrase by fourteenth-century Paulinus Minorita serves as a key concept in discussing medieval forgeries and fakes. See Michelina Di Cesare, *Studien zu Paulinus Venetus De mapa mundi*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Studien und Texte, 58 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015).

47 For more on the chronotope; see Kotten’s contribution to this volume; and Classen’s introduction.

48 Quoted by Eduard Vlasov, “The World According to Bakhtin: On the Description of Space and Spatial Forms in Mikhail Bakhtin’s Works,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 37.1/2 (March–June 1995): 37–58; here 42.

49 Ibid, 40.

mirror, with both being visual signifiers of an abstract “space,” which the human mind can barely apprehend in its non-mediated form<sup>50</sup>: the *Mirror* and the map summarize these spaces, whether the vast dimensions of actual geography or the numerous possible sequences of judicial events.<sup>51</sup> Unlike the literary chronotope of Bakhtin, however, both cartography and the legal system involve a structure able to incorporate numerous and changing protagonists. In other words – the fictive narrative is missing a hero, a role adopted by the reader, scholar, or jurist, who becomes a *homo viator* within the realm of law.

Despite its allusive spatio-temporal setting, the *Mirror* equally exploits a cartographic chronotope by a similar “flattening” of information in the law imagery. Theoretical cases can freely employ different time spans of past and hypothetical future, as the only criterion is that of the judicial situation, hence incorporating the time spans into one theoretical plane. Indeed, the author declares several times in the *Mirror* that a trial can take place in almost any court, as legal jurisdiction is applied right across the feudal hierarchy in Saxony in the same manner, whether in the royal court or in a small village. Likewise, each of the rather generic castles depicted in the illustrations, imaginary or real, is an emblem of feudal authority rather than an actual depiction.

## The *Sachsenspiegel* as a World History

Though geographical and legal paths can split and turn in many directions, the visible and invisible roads of the Ebstorf map and the *Mirror* progress along the linear path of Christian cosmology. These two text-images are conceptually and visually contained in the body of Christ: his body is the map, with his head, palms, and feet emerging at the ends of the world.<sup>52</sup> The text of the *Mirror*’s first

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50 Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caril Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981), 189. When relating to geographical space, Bakhtin argues that locality is “a trace of event,” and here notes the integrality of the historical-geographical space as depicted in the maps.

51 In His contribution to this volume, Kotten refers to the specific “chronotope of adventure.” From the opposite perspective – some of the medieval narratives utilize the journey, the movement across geographical span, as a substitute for a chronology of events.

52 This formula is not unique to the Ebstorf map, and well established in the late medieval European *mappaemundi*. Hartmut Kugler, “Symbolische Weltkarten – der Kosmos im Menschen. Symbolstrukturen in der Universalkartographie bis Kolumbus,” *Gutenberg und die neue Welt* (see note 10), 33–58; here 48–51. Moreover, the identity between the human body and the world is rooted in the history of diagram and specifically in the microcosmic-macrocosmic diagram of Isidore of Seville. Ramírez-Weaver, “William of Conches” (see note 28), 12.



prologue declares that “Gott ist selber Recht”: law is God and is derived from God (Fig. 1). The upper part of the map presents the east, symbol of birth and the place of paradise, Eden. The face of Christ, designed as the *Mandilion*,<sup>53</sup> dominates the image of the Original Sin in Eden to the right, with the “oracle of sun and moon” to the left. Likewise, one of the last images in both the WS and DS displays Eike, the author, trampled under his very own manuscript, from which emerges the image of God (Fig. 2).<sup>54</sup> The head of Christ is depicted both in the map and in the *Mirror* as an *icona*, with the map and *Mirror* serving as an analogy to Christ’s body (Fig. 4).

This general time-frame of the world nonetheless visually undergoes a transformation in the *Mirror*, according to the new agenda of human authority over law and judgment. A spatio-temporal manipulation is presented in the *Mirror* as early as in the first sequence, which portrays the creation of mankind and a general world history up to the thirteenth century. While the text initiates human history with the Original Sin, the illustrations invert this chronology, with the regular world history now being read bottom-up. Looking at the scenes of the prologue folio from top to bottom, the upper one displays Eike as he delivers his manuscript to the figures of Emperors Constantine and Charlemagne, the historical role-models for a Christian king (Fig. 1).<sup>55</sup> The same composition is repeated below, with an allegorical, contemporary king being given the sword of justice by Christ. This composition reappears for a third time in the scene below, now displaying Christ as God, creating the naked Adam. The bottom scene, in an almost opposite chronological order, presents the Original Sin – which can be perceived in this context as the first crime of mankind. Caviness considers the shift from the asymmetric composition into the symmetrical one of Adam and Eve at the bottom, as marking the rejection of the Original Sin. She contends that most of the trial scenes in the manuscripts are featured along the same pattern of the three first scenes, in order to reaffirm the privilege given to human law to penalize the human crimes that have resulted from the Original Sin.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, the

53 Ungruh, “Paradies und *vera icon*” (see note 41), 314–15.

54 The HS text is partial and missing several important parts; and while the text itself does exist in the OS, the illustrations for this part are not complete.

55 A presentation of biblical and historical kings as role models for the ruler was a common tactic in the medieval mirrors: Thomas Aquinas in his text “on Kingship” portrays Louis IX of France as such a role-model. *Thomas Aquinas, On Kingship: to the King of Cyprus*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949), xxx–xxxiv. See also Gernot Kocher, “Darstellungen des Landrechts in illustrierten Rechtshandschriften,” in *Das Bürger Landrecht*, 119–24; here 121–22.

56 Madeline H. Caviness, “Putting the Judge in his P(a)lace: Pictorial Authority in the *Sachsenspiegel*,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 54 (2000): 308–20; here 314.



Fig. 7: WS fol. 49v: Saxony, Bavaria, Franconia, and Swabia

framed image of Eden in the Ebstorf map appears as a prototype of ideal civilization, duplicated in the central image of Jerusalem, which portrays a second Eden and an ultimate spiritual and corporeal destination, and is echoed in the image of the fortified Rome.

## Micro-Histories

The Ebstorf map and the *Mirror* share historical and mythological “flash-backs”, signified by isolated emblems and signs in the mythical stations of the *Alexanderroman* in the map, and, rephrasing Manuwald, by “micro-histories” in the *Sachsenspiegel*.<sup>57</sup> For example, in the WS book 53.2 (fol. 49v, Fig. 7) reads:

<sup>57</sup> Kupfer, “Medieval World Maps” (see note 34), 265.

Saxony, Bavaria, Franconia, and Swabia had all been kingdoms. After the Romans conquered them, their names were changed and they were called dukedoms. Nevertheless, the Romans retained the princes as their men, and their banner estates under that name. Later the emperors discontinued both the offices of the crown vassals and their banner fiefs.<sup>58</sup>

This history of the German duchies, ostensibly originating already in the Roman period, demonstrate the validity of this territorial division and simultaneously the violation of the Saxon political order by the Roman emperors. The text continues with a third paragraph that clarifies the righteous management of the feudal hierarchy and the collection of money by the German emperor and his subordinate institutions, which had replaced the ancient Roman ones:

Each and every judge collects his court fine within his jurisdiction but no indemnity payment because the judge cannot be judge and plaintiff at the same time ... one may not divide a legal jurisdiction, nor may the invested person divide a fief completely to the extent that an irrevocable feudal succession is set up so that the peasants must accept it unless it is a separate country that is part of the banner estate.<sup>59</sup>

The illustration for this part plays with the chronology detailed in it. The four Saxon kings, robbed of their crowns, are presented in the second row, as a flashback, while the upper row reflects the feudal hierarchy of the thirteenth century: each king delivers a glove to his princes, and they in turn hand a glove to the inferior *Schultheiß* (village mayor), who wears the red-and-white cap. The *Schultheiß* passes the glove to a Jew, marked by a pointed hat, as Jews possessed a fairly generous jurisdictional autonomy under the German emperors.<sup>60</sup> The third register follows the order of the text, presenting an image of a judge wearing the cap of the *Schultheiß*, and a figure similar to that of the above king-without-a-crown, delivering the payment of the “court fine” to the judge.

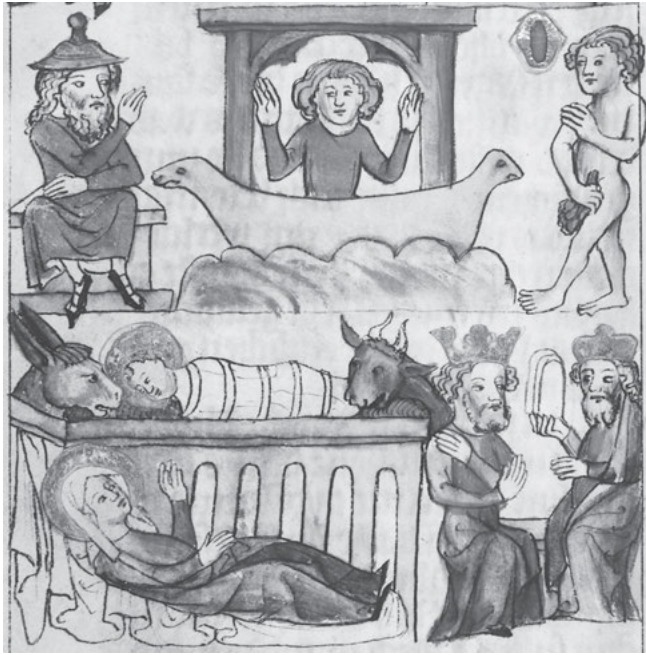
History, hierarchy, and bureaucracy are mediated by the same pictorial language, in which temporality is absent, and history is shaped as if portraying a single moment in which the reported events from past and present occur simultaneously: the crowns, separated from the kings’ heads, represent their former state of authority, a flashback clarifying the privilege of the feudal hierarchy of Eike’s time. Utilizing history at the service of validating the current social structure is

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<sup>58</sup> Dobozy, *The Saxon Mirror* (see note 1), 129.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Guido Kisch, “The Jewry-Law of the Medieval German Law-Books: Part II. The Legal Status of the Jews,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 10 (1940): 99–184. For the iconography of the Jews under Friedrich II’s rule, see Nina Rowe, “Synagoga Tumbles, a Rider Triumphs: Clerical Viewers and the *Fürstenportal* of Bamberg Cathedral,” *Gesta* 45.2 (2006): 15–42.



**Fig. 8:** WS fol. 10v: The Six Ages of Man.

repeated in another flashback, depicting the history of mankind through the theme of the Six Ages of Man (Fig. 8):

Origen foretold long ago that there would be six ages, each age calculated to last a thousand years, and in the seventh, the world is expected to end. Now we know from the Holy Scriptures that the first age began with Adam. The second began with Noah, with Abraham the third, with Moses the fourth, with David the fifth, and with God's birth the sixth. We are now in the seventh age without the certainty of duration.<sup>61</sup>

Eike quotes Origen, to whom he attributes the division of human history into seven ages, personified by the figures of the Old Testament.<sup>62</sup> The second and third registers of folio 10v in the WS seem to illustrate these ages precisely, personified in the images of the six biblical kings and Nativity. Indeed, Ruth Schmidt-Wiegend reads this scene as following traditional Christian iconography: Noah's

<sup>61</sup> Dobozy, *The Saxon Mirror* (see note 1), 69.

<sup>62</sup> Here Eike mistakenly relates this ancient notion to Origen, while the Christian phrasing of the "Ages of Life" theme as seven ages belongs to Isidore of Seville. Peter Landau, "Der Entstehungsort des Sachsenspiegels (see note 13), 87.

Ark, representing the Church and as its pre-figuration, is positioned above the scene of the Nativity. I suggest, however, that the Ages of Man bear a duo-symbolism, as the modeling and composition of the figures locates the biblical history within a contemporary feudal hierarchy.<sup>63</sup> Abraham, with the pointed hat of the Jew, appears as a judge, representing the judicial autonomy of the Jewish community under the German emperors. Abraham is facing Adam, who stares back at him, standing with his hands raised in the position of a defendant, with the mediating figure of Noah in between, presenting the original meaning of the orant position – evidence and testimony. Moses, in the register below, is wearing the cap of the *Schultheiß*, handing the tablet of the old law to King David, as a *Schultheiß* to his lord.<sup>64</sup> David, the figure traditionally identified with the contemporary king in the *Mirror* literature, is represented as a Judge (echoing Abraham's posture above), and located between the Old Law (Moses) and the new law (the birth of Christ). In this regard, the composition could be read as an allegory for the position of the contemporary jurist, who should maintain a status quo between the past and modern law, and between the ecclesiastical and the secular law.

## The Cartographic Chronotope: Myth, History, and Geography

The “Ages of Man” is but one of several such “micro-histories” referring to Christian and local perspectives. In a similar fashion, the Ebstorf map incorporates biblical places (Eden, Jerusalem, Ararat), historical sites (Sicily, the major cities in Germany, France, and England), and mythical ones (the stations of Alexander from the *Alexanderroman*, and the eastern lands of legendary creatures depicted in the margins). The artistic means are thus alike: the military camp of Alexander the Great in north-west Africa shares its schematic form with that of the European castles, and the same type of mark is used to indicate all the other real cities in the map.<sup>65</sup> The pillars of these geographic world images are also the places of crucial

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<sup>63</sup> Schmidt-Wiegand, “Text und Bild” (see note 5), 23–24.

<sup>64</sup> Utilizing the terminology of the seven ages to describe the feudal hierarchy is validated again through the opening of the fourth book, which explains the feudal structure.

<sup>65</sup> The generic portrayal of architecture resembles that of the *Mirror*'s illustrations. Caviness notes that the attention given to the “places” design in the *Mirror* is minimal (especially in the HS and OS), to the extent that a church and a farm can be depicted in the same manner. However, as I will show later, this changes dramatically when the buildings become legal and institutional symbols. Caviness, “Putting the Judge in his P(a)lace” (see note 56), 312.

historical events (such as Jerusalem and Rome), summarized by consistent and similar emblems, and identified by inscriptions and several rare symbols. The visual patterns of the Ebstorf map and the *Mirror* thus define a new, non-temporal relationship between the historical events, which now serve as key symbols in an abstraction of the geographical span. Though the semi-legendary cities no longer exist, they are depicted in the map much like the contemporary cities, locating both historical and legendary past within the structure of presumed actual geography.

In contrast to the Ebstorf map and other *mappaemundi*, mythical anecdotes are absent from the *Mirror*. In only one place does the micro-history reflect a classical Roman perspective, in the first part of book III.45 (fol. 47r–47v), which details a brief history of the world before Christ:



Fig. 9: WS: fol. 47r: The history of the Saxon forefathers.

Babylon was the birthplace of the empire that ruled over all the world. Cyrus destroyed that realm and transformed it into the Persian empire, which survived until Darius the Last. Alexander the Great conquered him and transferred the empire to Greece. The empire flourished there until it succumbed to Rome, and Julius Caesar became emperor. To this day Rome controls the temporal sword and, on behalf of St. Peter, the spiritual one also.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Dobozy, *The Saxon Mirror* (see note 1), 126.

This extremely condensed world history is contained within two separate registers, one in fol 47r and the second on its obverse (Figs. 9–10). Recalling the image of the Saxon kings who lost their crowns (Fig. 7), the empires are again represented as crowned kings, wearing golden robes, each stabbing his predecessor with his sword in a chain of violent regicides. Their figures are identical, and the *translatio imperi* is depicted as a course of assassins, an antithetic transformation of authority, presented using the same repetitive formula as that of the ideal one (c.f. the duplicated pointing figures in many of the WS scenes). The text continues:



Fig. 10: WS: fol. 47v: The history of the Saxon forefathers.

Our forefathers had been in Alexander's army, and when our forefathers came here, they routed the Thuringians. Alexander had conquered all of Asia with their help. Once Alexander died, they no longer dared to establish themselves in the land because of the people's anger. They set out with three hundred ships. All but fifty-four were wrecked; of these eighteen went to Prussia and settled there, twelve took the island of Rügen, and twenty-four came here to this land. Since there were not enough Saxons to work the land after they had defeated and scattered the Thuringian lords, they spared the peasants and lent them land so that they would cultivate the fields [for the Saxons] ...<sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Dobozy, *The Saxon Mirror* (see note 1), 126.

The text establishes the local genealogy by claiming that the Saxons' forefathers had been part of the glorious army of Alexander and had contributed to his conquests.<sup>68</sup> The artist has omitted Alexander's death and united the different parts of the ancient forefathers' voyages into an image of a single ship, recalling Noah's ark (Fig. 8). The forefathers in the image do not sail overseas but, rather, in a quite surreal manner journey through the green land on which the corpses of their slaughtered enemies lie.<sup>69</sup> This awkward combination of journey over land and overseas presents an opposite version of the "chronotope of adventure" typical to the literary voyages of medieval venerated heroes. As demonstrated by Jiří Koten in this volume, the author of the heroic epic recreates a temporal progress by means of the geographical shifts and by specifying the distance covered by the protagonists.<sup>70</sup>

In contrast, the merging of land and sea combines not only the different stages of the historical narrative as reported in the text, but also the originally differentiated and specific geographical regions: Prussia, Rügen, and Saxony. The course of the voyage is summarized into an image of Saxon superiority: in the register below, the figures of the forefathers spare the Thuringian peasants, in order that they will cultivate the newly conquered land. The historical text is converted into a judicial power-structure: the depiction of killing is combined with that of the journey, to create an heroic emblem; while the surrender of the peasants can be perceived as an acceptance of Saxon authority on the one hand, and perhaps as a demonstration of the forefathers' mercy on the other hand.<sup>71</sup>

One specific example from both the WS and the HS demonstrates the presentation of a political state through the abstract cartographic chronotope, even when that state is based on an actual and specific geography (Figs. 11–12). The

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<sup>68</sup> This argument is likely to have been influenced by the then very popular Aeneas novel/story, in which Aeneas, the founder of Rome, is told to have fled from the Trojan war, later becoming the founder of Rome. See especially the in-depth anthology *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Markus, Stock (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2016). The Ebstorf Map "Christianizes" some of the Alexander legends, presenting his enemies as Jews and Gog and Magog as cannibal titans. Asa Simon Mittman, "Gates, Hats, and Naked Jews: Sorting out the Nubian Gourds on the Ebstorf Map," *FKW//Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und visuelle Kultur* 54 (Feb. 2013): 88–101; here 91–93.

<sup>69</sup> The color green is rather conventional in depictions of the sea in the *Mirror* and in many other manuscripts' illustrations; however, the bodies of the fallen enemies constitute an indication of the merging of terrestrial and maritime scenes.

<sup>70</sup> Koten, "Time and Space" in this volume.

<sup>71</sup> Judicial mercy had a crucial function in the new system of law, which sometimes had to protect her members from the vengeance of the convicted families. James Whitman, *The Origins of Reasonable Doubt: Theological Roots of Criminal Trial*. Yale Law Library Series in Legal History and Reference (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 10–11, 89–90, 110.





Fig. 11: WS: fol. 59v: military service in the east and west.



Fig. 12: HS, ca. 1300, Heidelberg, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, MS Cod. Pal. Germ. 164, fol.1v: military service in the east and west.

section discussing feudal liabilities in fol. 1v in the HS and fol. 59v in WS declares that every nobleman is obliged to complete six weeks of military service at his lord's command, according to the location of his possessions (Fig. 11).<sup>72</sup> The lowest register clarifies the territory of the required service: a thick line marks the River Saale, which divides the eastern (today Poland) and western parts of the Saxon domain. This is not an actual geography, but rather that of military actions: the two scenes to the right present the *humagium* given to the Holy Roman emperor in the west, while the scenes on the left depict the vassal pledging an oath to his lord, before leaving to fight the foe in the eastern territories. The cartographic sign of the river is more carefully drawn in the earlier HS, and the foe wear the exotic hats of heretics, a possible historical reminder of the once pagan Poland, omitted from the later WS (Fig. 12). More importantly, the hieroglyph of feudal service demonstrates the same symbolic articulation seen in the Ebstorf map, and the non-spatial indications of space.

## Picturing Simultaneous Pathways of the Law

So far, I have demonstrated how the historical highlights in the Ebstorf map and the illustrations in the *Mirror* established the foundations for an *Imago mundi* frame, and the voyages of the past, actual or spiritual, as a basis for the power structure of the present. The *Mirror*, however, was designed to assist the jurist in specific cases. Hence, the syntax of each illustration as a micro-cosmos of the law is at the basis of defining the *Mirror's* chronotope. Returning to our earliest hypothetical example of theft, the selection of the visual emblems from the possibilities detailed in the text indicates a further guidance, and even an interpretation of the legal processes suggested. In seeking to predict the occurrence of events during the judicial procedure, the text of the second book specifies the punishments for a thief, beginning with hanging ("A thief shall be hanged ..., " WS, book II, fol. 29r).<sup>73</sup> However, hanging is a severe punishment, and the next lines detail some lighter variations of punishment. Stealing less than three shillings is punished by flagellation and the cutting of one's hair, and can be redeemed by an appropriate fine when paid on time, and a larger one if paid late.

The artist presents the four options for punishment: hanging, flagellation, and a small or large fine (Fig. 13, two upper registers), while omitting the beginning of the story— the felony itself. Observing these four options, illustrated in

<sup>72</sup> Dobozy, *The Saxon Mirror* (see note 1), 144

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 96.

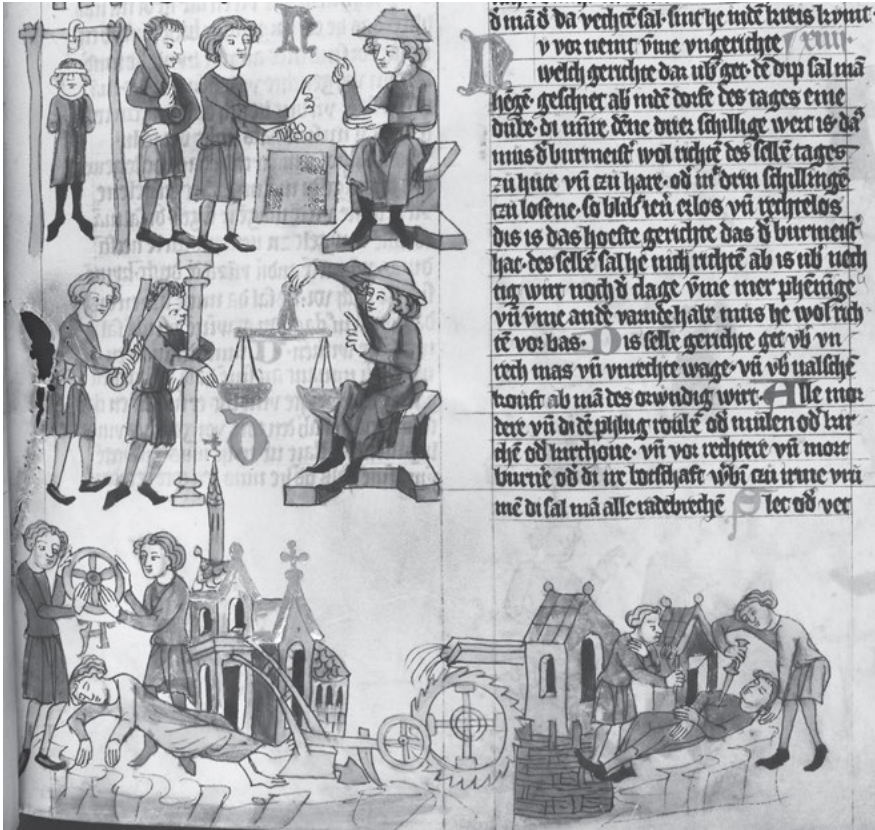


Fig. 13: WS: fol. 29r: punishments for theft and murder, bottom register: the offence against church and mill.

one block, it becomes evident that the judge, plaintiff, *schöffe*, and hanged thief cannot coexist in the same space and time. Manuwald argues that proximity, gestures, and especially touch, can be sufficient for a visual narration; these criteria, however, are relevant to actual persons, whereas the *Mirror*'s figures are not necessarily actual persons, or indeed sharing the same space.<sup>74</sup> Hangings were executed in the open, physically far from the location in which the judge sat. Moreover, Eike does not specify where exactly the judgment and verdict had been pronounced, and whether, much like nowadays, the authorities judging and executing were necessarily the same. In addition, the judicial procedure itself could

<sup>74</sup> Manuwald, "Pictorial Narrative" (see note 2), 275.

take time – the hanging would not necessary have been executed on the same day of the judgment. The four options of punishment, like the enlarged, zoomed-in places on the map, do not portray an actual legal scene but, rather, possible guidelines for the judicial structure.

“All murderers, those who take by force a plow or (something from) a mill or church or churchyard ... shall be broken on the wheel ... .”<sup>75</sup> The bottom of the same folio 29r (Fig. 13) depicts the punishment of the murderer, visually and textually adjacent. The artist has skipped some of the options mentioned in the text, depicting symmetrically, the crime scene involving two murderers to the right, and the punishment by two executioners to the left. Unlike other murder scenes, the identity of the murdered person is negligible compared to the attention given to the offence against the institutions where the murder was carried out. These affected institutions, namely, hypothetical mill and church, are merged into one another, comprising a hybrid, perhaps metaphorical image. The mill and the church are symbolized by the same schematic architectonic formulas employed to portray the cities on the maps and all other buildings in the *Mirror*<sup>76</sup>: In contrast, the actual practice of torture on the wheel is omitted. The scene includes the body of the murderer, already punished, and a minimized, small wheel presented by the jurists as a mere symbol rather than an actual tool of punishment.

The wheel of torture is replaced by the active serrated water-wheel of the mill, which binds together the mill and the church: the revolving water-wheel is integrated with the church through a smaller wheel and a ladder leaning against its wall. Here the illustrator accentuates the production of flour from grain above the water-wheel, an old Christian symbol of true faith: the mill separates the wheat from the chaff, an allegory of the spiritual core concealed in the physical world. The ecclesiastical metaphor is analogous to the judicial procedure, in which the judge, replacing and embodying the divine judgment of God, must peel off the layers of subjective versions from the true facts.<sup>77</sup> Christian ethics thus lie at the foundations of the concept of justice, presenting actual life and Christian life as dependent upon one another, and unable to flourish without the existence of Saxon law.

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<sup>75</sup> Dobozy, *The Saxon Mirror* (see note 1), 97.

<sup>76</sup> Wolf, “Kriterien zur Datierung” (see note 42), 468.

<sup>77</sup> Kirk Ambrose, “The ‘Mystic Mill’ Capital at Vézelay,” *Wind and Water in the Middle Ages: Fluid Technologies from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Steven A. Walton. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 322 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), 235–58; here 236, 245; Beryl Rowland, “The Mill in Popular Metaphor from Chaucer to the Present Day,” *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 33 (1969): 69–79.



Fig. 14: WS: fol. 29r, detail: 15. WS: fol. 29v, detail: treachery and the pyre of unfaith.

The split narrative offers the jurists several paths to a just verdict. Though this approach is repeated throughout the entire manual, the concept of the “righteous path” is specifically demonstrated by an image linking between the infidelity of the wife and the deviant faith of the heretic displayed below. Folio 29r in WS (Fig. 14) depicts the punishment for adultery (beheading) and for sorcery (burning). The register of the fornicators presents the sinful act in the middle: the lover is raising an axe on the left, preparing to kill the betrayed husband; on the other side, the husband stands victorious over the lover’s corpse. This articulation confronts moral weakness with moral strength, resulting in a righteous verdict. The theme is accentuated in the register below, depicting those who engage with magic being burned on the pyre. The artist has added to this illustration a female personification absent from the text – *fides* (faith), holding a reliquary in her hands, symbolizing the right path as she turns away from the executioner.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> The golden reliquary is a visual light motif found in the majority of all four illustrated manuscripts of the *Mirror*, a reminder of the presence of God in the process of judgment.

## The Diagram, the Mnemonic Chronotope, and the Roads of Justice

Though sharing a similar text-image-letter relationship, schematic design, and “geographic chronotope, the *Mirror*’s illustrations and the Ebstorf map do not resemble one another in the usual sense. Rather, they illustrate abstract diagrams, in which specific sites or narrative endings are “zoomed-in” as highlights indicating a far more detailed corpus of knowledge. As such, both artworks demonstrate not only a cartographic chronotope, but also a mnemonic one.

The mnemonic aspect is widely acknowledged and explored in the study of medieval maps,<sup>79</sup> but has remained unrecognized in the imagery of the *Saxon Mirror*. As an *Imago mundi*, the map is an elaborate diagram of human knowledge: considering the corpus of the more comprehensive, large-scale *mappaemundi*, we are able to identify each part with a different topic: the south with the bestiar-ies and exotic creatures, the east with the beginnings of history, the north with mythology, and the west with the political reality and actual geography.<sup>80</sup> The numerous visual and textual abbreviations in the map were used as mnemonic keys to aid the viewers in remembering the vast cultural and political information that these keys represented.<sup>81</sup> In this respect, the image and syntax of the *mappaemundi* derive from the history of the circular diagram, representing astronomy, the winds, spheres, and other dimensions of the world as a whole.<sup>82</sup> Evelyn

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**79** Ingrid Baumgärtner, “Graphische Gestalt und Signifikanz” (see note 33), 117–29. See also Edson, *Mapping Time and Space* (see note 30), 4–9, 66–71. Interestingly, the diagrammatic basis of the world map is not restricted to the early Isidorian OT map, but reemerges in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as a frame containing only the names of places, from which the reader must restore the world geography, according to the same mnemonic principal of the Canon tables.

**80** “Actual geography,” or rather a relatively reliable cartography, was possible due to the familiarity of the map makers with European territories: short-term journeys and the development of roads facilitated a good-enough mapping in comparison to that of territories known from hearsay and legends only. The ‘actual’ illustration of western sites in the Ebstorf map and its relatives consolidates with their identification as belonging to the present age – the Age of Grace, further symbolized by their location in proximity to Christ’s feet. See Kugler’s cosmogenic schema (p. 15), as well as Edson, *Mapping Time and Space* (see note 30), 78–80; Denis Cosgrove, *Apollo’s Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore, MD, and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 61–66.

**81** See Madeline Caviness’s seminal discussion of the artistic twilight zone between diagram, inscription, image, and remembrance in late medieval art, “Images of Divine Order and the Third Mode of Seeing,” *Gesta* 22.2 (1983): 99–120; here 101, 107, 113.

**82** For a summary of world images in the circular diagram and its mnemonic functions, see Evelyn Edson, “World Maps and Easter Tables: Medieval Maps in Context,” *Imago Mundi* 48.1 (1996): 25–42; Barbara Obrist, “Wind Diagrams and Medieval Cosmology,” *Speculum* 72.1 (1997): 33–84.

Edson presents the medial stage of the *mappamundi* between a diagram and a map, as a circular OT scheme, in which the places are simply listed, similar to the columns of abbreviated names used as schemes of information.<sup>83</sup> The Ebstorf reverberation of man and world can be similarly traced to early Christian diagrams unifying the temperaments and elements, as well as in the late thirteenth century monumental Hereford map, incorporating the letters MORS and marginal emblems representing the Ages of Man.<sup>84</sup>

Indicating the cartographic, encyclopedic, and chronic similarities between the Ebstorf map and its circumstances and the visual language of the *Mirror*'s illustrations, the latter can be treated to as a codicological map, analogous to the twentieth century atlases of roads before the age of GPS. Cartography (and the circular diagram), however, is but one pole of the *Mirror* imagery. One should bear in mind the literary genre of the mirrors for princes, which was a primary source of inspiration for Eike, due to its inner partition of narratives, which detail particular moral and political situations that a leader might face. The 1260 *Mirror* by Thomas Aquinas, *De regno* ("On Kingship") demonstrates such episodic form, illustrating exemplary behavior through the deeds of both biblical kings and the relatively close history of King Louis IX of France.<sup>85</sup> The visual tribute to this form is evident from the opening folio of WS, in which the ideal Christian emperors, Constantine and Charlemagne, are presented as the ultimate model of kingship.

The diagrammatic representation of such mirrors was exceptionally embodied in the 1260's monumental sculptural program of the verso-façade of Reims Cathedral. Donna Sadler's iconographical and political study reveals it as having been created as a visual mirror for a prince – the same Louis IX, King of France, mentioned by Aquinas. It presents the highly naturalistic biblical figures within a geometric-cell structure, in which the figure's location indicates a moral content (Fig. 15). As in Eike's *Mirror*, the biblical figures display contemporary political features: Abraham in the bottom register appears as crusader blessed by a priest (Melchizedek), while the third, antithetic, figure in the row is dressed as a Muslim knight (Fig. 16).<sup>86</sup> Another bridging image-text of a moral choice diagram can be

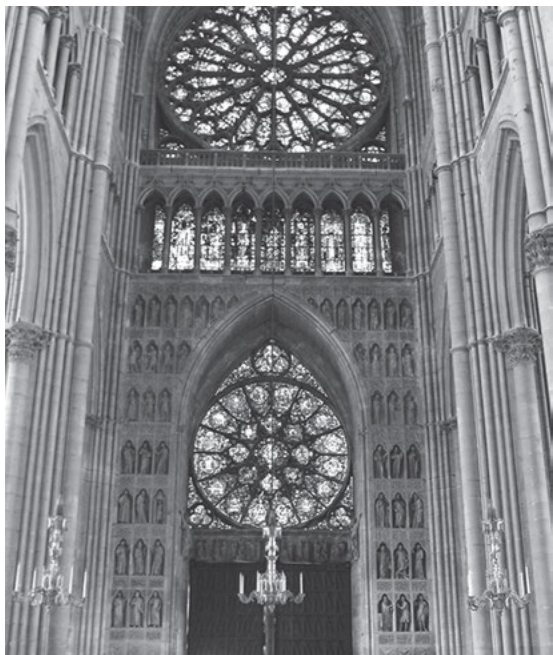
<sup>83</sup> Edson, "World Maps" (see note 82), 37; Kupfer, "Medieval World Maps" (see note 34), 265.

<sup>84</sup> On the identification of world images and the human figure in diagrammatic image, see Adam S. Cohen, "Making Memories in a Medieval Miscellany," *Gesta* 48.2 (2009): 135–52; here 137–40.

<sup>85</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship*, and for a further discussion of the *Mirror* genre as a Carolingian legacy in the English and French lands see Hans Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*. Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters. Freiherr-vom-Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe, 45 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006).

<sup>86</sup> Donna L. Sadler, *Reading the Reverse Façade of Reims Cathedral: Royalty and Ritual in 13th-Century France* (Farnham, Surrey, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), chapter 3: "Mirror of Princes in Stone," 119–60.





**Fig. 15:** Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Reims, interior, verso façade, after 1260.



**Fig. 16:** Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Reims, interior, verso façade, detail: Abraham, Melchizedek and a Muslim soldier.





**Fig. 17:** William Peraldus, *Summa de vitiis*, London, BL, Harley 3244 ff. 27v–28r: Diagram of the seven Vices and sub-Vices represented as devils.

seen in the 1265 English copy of the *Summa de vitiis*, written in 1236 by the Dominican monk William Peraldus. This is a scholastic compilation on the Virtues and Vices, broadening the scope of discussion and illustration of the Seven Deadly Sins. According to Michael Evans, though it was not meant to be a practical manual, the Vices are not abstractions but, rather, described in *exempla* stories that detail the components of these sins.<sup>87</sup> The opening illustration in the manuscript displays a knight on his horse, fully armored, protected by a tripartite shield and brandishing his sword at an abstract table-form building of demons and sub-demons representing the sins and designed as an abstraction of a fortress (Fig. 17).<sup>88</sup> The knight's armor is spiritual: the seven pipes portrayed above symbolize his seven

<sup>87</sup> Michael Evans, "An Illustrated Fragment of Peraldus's *Summa* of Vice: Harleian MS 3244," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982): 14–68; here 14–15.

<sup>88</sup> The knight's armor refers to the Pauline concept of spiritual warfare: the hauberk of justice, the shield of faith, the helm of salvation and the sword of the spirit.

virtues, and the tripartite shield bears the names of the Holy Trinity.<sup>89</sup> Evans and others have focused on the moral symbolism of this image, but in the context of the *Mirror's* illustrations it sheds light on the missing image of the *Homo viator* in the process of contemplation, by visualizing the spiritual search through a mnemonic device (here designed as an architectonic table), which summarizes the content of the manual. The cells, or building blocks, represent the possible moral choices or challenges, and echo other architectonic diagrams.

Considering the late medieval development of diagrammatic visualization of knowledge, many such symbolic, vertical images represent an abstraction of the contemplative journey to wisdom, truth, virtue, and faith. Among them are the fourteenth-century “towers of wisdom,” presenting metaphoric buildings of the virtues necessary for the soul to reach perfection,<sup>90</sup> and the various tree-form diagrams (Tree of Life, Tree of Jesse, map-trees, history-trees),<sup>91</sup> and the ladder, an image regularly accompanied by the Virtues and Vices and originating in the biblical scene of Jacob’s dream.<sup>92</sup> Finally, maps inverted into diagrams are visible in Matthew Paris’ 1259 *Chronica Maiora*.<sup>93</sup> His innovative maps relinquish the symbolic and encyclopedic information typical of the *mappaemundi*, and display specific itineraries in England and beyond. Matthew’s maps are formed as vertical diagrams, in which the emblems of places are articulated one above the other around a central axis, as a memorizing column, neglecting the actual proportions of geographic expanse.<sup>94</sup> For the jurist searching for a specific case, it is the vertical organization of the *Mirror's* compositions that similarly assists in a quick location of the relevant clause.

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<sup>89</sup> Evans, “An Illustrated Fragment” (see note 87), 22.

<sup>90</sup> Lucy Freeman Sandler, “John of Metz, The Tower of Wisdom,” *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, ed. Marry Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkovsky. Material Texts (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 215–18.

<sup>91</sup> Golan, “The Tree of Knowledge” (see note 11); Kupfer, “Medieval World Maps” (see note 34), 266.

<sup>92</sup> Maryanne Cline Horowitz, *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 67–78; Francis T. Marchese, “Virtues and Vices: Examples of Medieval Knowledge Visualization,” *Information Visualisation (IV)*, 2013, 17th International Conference, IEEE (2013), 359–65.

<sup>93</sup> For images, see: [http://cartographic-images.net/Cartographic\\_Images/225.1\\_Palestine.html](http://cartographic-images.net/Cartographic_Images/225.1_Palestine.html) (last accessed on Feb. 22, 2018).

<sup>94</sup> Daniel K. Connolly, “Imagined Pilgrimage in the Itinerary Maps of Matthew Paris,” *The Art Bulletin* 81.4 (1999): 598–622. Connolly argues that despite the detailed and specific itineraries, as well as the highly practical and interactive fashion in which the maps of the codex were designed as foldable (599, 601), they were viewed, read, and practiced as a “monastic meditational exercise” (606).

## God-Given Roads of Justice

The benefit of the aforementioned mnemonic diagrams depends on their becoming engrained in the memory, which can be accomplished by their constant repetition and artistic development within the sequence of the illustrations. The following twin images in the HS and WS demonstrate the various spatio-temporal strategies detailed so far: selective illustration, cartography, and potentiality. The text discusses legal immunity for the religious, women, and Jews in *Landrecht* II (illustrated in the three bottom registers in WS, fol. 41r, and HS, fol. 11r, Figs. 18–19):

Every day and all times, priests and religious, girls and women, and Jews shall enjoy immunity of their person and their property. The same holds for churches and churchyards, each village within its fosse and fence, Plows, mills, and the king's highway, [and everything] on the water and in the fields. Everything that enters [these places] shall have constant immunity.

Holy days and certain peace days ... these consist of four days: Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Thursday is the day to consecrate the holy oil with which we are all anointed to Christianity at baptism. On Thursday God dipped [bread] into the chalice with his disciples. That was when our law was instituted. Also on Thursday, God granted heaven to humankind and reopened the path for us that had been barred. It was on Friday that God made man and was martyred by man. On Saturday he rested once he had created heaven and earth and all that is in it. It was also Saturday when he rested in the grave after his martyrdom. In addition Priests who are teachers of Christianity are consecrated on Sundays.<sup>95</sup>

Chronologically, the viewer should read these illustrations as either a contemporary legal state with “flashbacks” or, in inversion of the text, as bottom-up: from sacred history to current reality. In both manuscripts, HS and WS, the middle register of the three features the emperor with a floating emblem of the fleur-de-lis, a symbol of royal power, while welcoming a Franciscan monk,<sup>96</sup> followed by a novice, a married woman with coif, and a virgin, with a Jewish man closing the row. Schmidt-Wiegand noted the gap between the text, detailing the territories under immunity, and the highly compact illustration in the register below, presenting a church and a mill while omitting the portrayal of royal roads. She further demonstrated that both a main phrase in the text and the image of the church and mill are formulas, which reappear in the manuscripts in other connections.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Dobozy, *The Saxon Mirror* (see note 1), 112–13.

<sup>96</sup> The monk is identified as a Cistercian in the HS. Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, “Rechtssprichwörter und ihre Wiedergabe in den Bilderhandschriften des *Sachsenspiegels*,” *Text und Bild: Aspekte des Zusammenwirkens* (see note 10), 593–629; here 615.

<sup>97</sup> Schmidt-Wiegand, “Rechtssprichwörter” (see note 96).

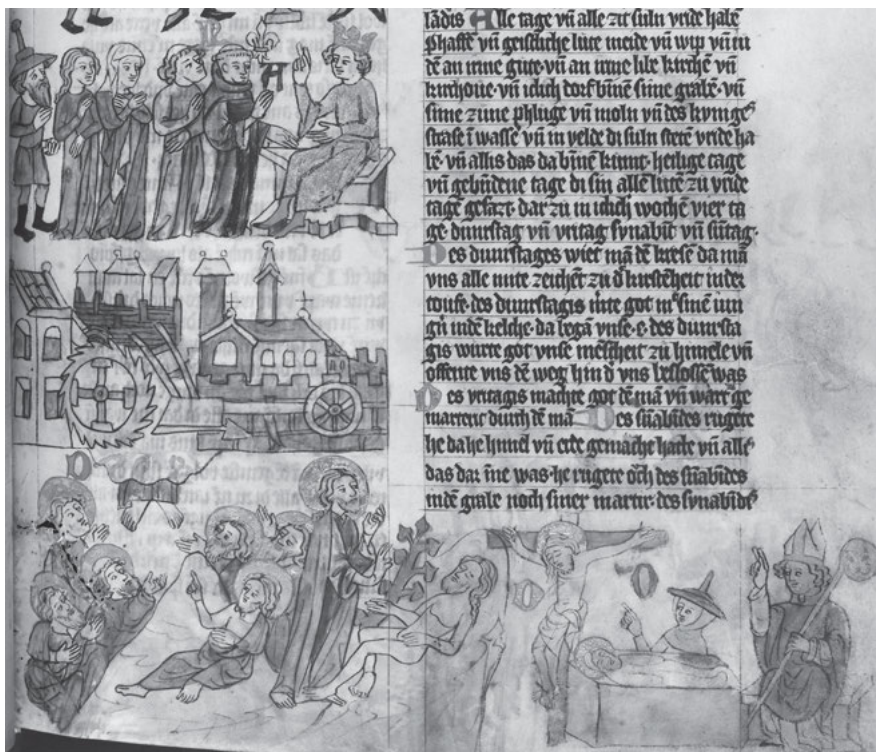


Fig. 18: WS: fol. 41r: legal immunity and the days of feast.

Indeed, the middle register employs the same hybrid image seen in Fig. 14, as part of the murderer's punishment. This time (Figs. 18–19), although the illustration includes an emblem of a walled city in the background, the connecting images of the wheel (and now also the plow) are alike, suggesting again the law as the link between secular and ecclesiastical institutions.

The bottom register is widened into a strip of scenes from the life of Christ, representing the four days of peace. The dense composition is highly selective, with the illustrator having skipped several important events such as baptism and the Last Supper, portraying only five of the ten liturgical events mentioned in the text: the Ascension, Creation of Adam, Crucifixion, Christ in the grave, and the consecration of a bishop. These images follow the days of peace but not the chronology of the sacred history. Rather, the outer figures on both sides of the strip point at Christ, to mark the path of faith, while the internal scenes contain dichotomous images: life and death are joined together as the Creation of Adam is followed by the Crucifixion. The later WS displays Christ's dead body in front



Fig. 19: HS: fol. 11r: legal immunity and the days of feast.

of a figure of a Jew, who is pointing with an accusing finger, the judicial gesture used to identify the criminal in court. Jews could not take part in a Christian trial, so his gesture becomes illegal, recalling the Jews' sin in handing Christ over to the Romans.<sup>98</sup>

In both HS and WS this image echoes the opening folio of the abbreviated world history (Fig. 1): the chronology of events is almost inverted, as the last sight of Christ on earth is turned into a visual and conceptual beginning. The Ascension is located in the composition's intersection, opening both the horizontal presentation of the days of peace and the vertical, anagogic path of humankind to redemption, embodied in the balance between Church and the royal court, as

<sup>98</sup> Interestingly, the HS original version displaying a young priest being anointed by the bishop is converted into a Jewish figure in the WS, though absent from the text itself. This suggests the growing hostility towards the Jews that took place after the thirteenth century tolerant policy of Friedrich II. On the Jews in Frederician iconography and anti-Semitism, see Nina Rowe "Synagogas Tumbles" (see note 60), 31–32.

well as in the social mercy offered by the king's protection. Following the traditional formula, this scene strongly emphasizes the mountain from which Christ ascends, and the pointing fingers of his disciples, one of which almost touches Christ's feet.

The WS text depicts the Ascension as a prototype of the human spiritual path, as it rephrases the original text of the New Testament<sup>99</sup>: "God granted heaven to humankind and reopened the path for us that had been barred".<sup>100</sup> This phrase and the primary place dedicated to this very specific moment as a visual key of the folio, reinforces the numerous potential legal options of the *Mirror* as a guide, as well as God's law as infrastructure of the customary law. The consolidation of actual and conceptual topography, of history, and of feudal structure becomes clear when comparing the almost twin images of the HS and WS. The HS registers are marked by three clear separating lines. The WS illustrator, in contrast, has omitted the skyline above Christ's cloud. Christ thus merges into the upper scene of mill and church, while the cloud becomes a connecting thread binding them together.

The church and the mill, the king's roads, and all his territories emerge from that cloud: much like the world image seen in the Ebstorf map, they are incorporated with the image of God, leaving his bare feet as the border between the heavenly and mundane, past and present.

## Conclusion

From an artistic perspective, the illustrations for the Saxon law present a rather banal and simplistic portrayal of human figures and Christian iconography, employing highly similar formulas throughout the manuscripts. Some of the images appear as abstractions, as an inventory of legal symbols and events. However, an exploration of the inner structure of these miniature scenes reveals that these seemingly predictable patterns constitute the foundations for the functionality of the images.

The vast amount of information detailed in the *Mirror* needed to be accessible, memorable, and deductive. The images accomplished this by adopting the

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<sup>99</sup> "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts, 1: 9–11).

<sup>100</sup> Dobozy, *The Saxon Mirror* (see note 1), 112–13.

primary modes of medieval abstraction – the map and the diagram – creating a unique chronotope of a geographical and conceptual journey. The split narratives were created as sub-categories of the feudal and criminal ones, visualizing the law according to the same divisions found at the basis of diagrams of knowledge, and further developing the repetitive and geometric form of the mnemonic devices. Each of the compositions “speaks” in more than one voice, with the legal cases’ incorporation of Christian symbolism, and the “micro-histories” as metaphors of the contemporary feudal hierarchy.

These multiple webs of pictorial knowledge demanded various modes of observation and contemplation, analogous to those rooted in the cartographic imagery. Both the *Mirror* and the *mappaemundi* portray a multi-layered image of Christ, world history, and world image, highlighting the major paths open to mankind within it, and enabling the viewer and reader to experience hypothetical future narratives by means of a new articulation of the past. In defining the chronotope of the *Mirror*, episodes such as the murder scene in the church and mill and the days of legal immunity encapsulate the *Mirror*’s complexity, analogous to that concealed in the *mappaemundi*: a geographic non-site, a Christian sub-text, and the symbols of actual punishment.

The viewer plays a special part in reading the map and the *Mirror*, as their chronotopes intentionally leave the protagonist’s position empty – this is for the viewer to take up. In imagining past or future journeys, or the different ways by which to overcome a complex juridical situation, the *Mirror* becomes a subject of study and even contemplation, as the judge and jurists, plaintiff and defendant, struggle to find their way on the paths of the law.



Doaa Omran

# Anachronism and Anatopism in the French *Vulgate Cycle* and the Forging of English Identity through Othering Muslims/Saracens

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.<sup>1</sup>

Modern research has not accepted the annihilation of Arthur. Timidly but resolutely the latest and best-informed writers unite to proclaim his reality. They cannot tell when in this dark period he lived, or where he held sway and fought his battles. They are ready to believe, however, that there was a great British warrior, who kept the light of civilization burning against all the storms that beat, and that behind his sword there sheltered a faithful following of which the memory did not fail ... None the less, to have established a basis in fact for the story of Arthur is a service which should be respected. In this account we prefer to believe that the story with which Geoffrey delighted the fiction-loving Europe of the twelfth century is not all fancy. It is all true or it ought to be; and more and better besides. And wherever men are fighting against barbarism, tyranny, and massacre, for freedom, law, and honor, let them remember that the fame of their deeds, even though they themselves be exterminated, may perhaps be celebrated as long as the world rolls round. Let us then declare that King Arthur and his noble knights, guarding the Sacred Flame of Christianity and the theme of a world order, sustained by valor, physical strength, and good horses and armor, slaughtered innumerable hosts of foul barbarians and set decent folk an example for all time.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Leslie P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), 1.

2 Winston Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples: the Birth of Britain* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1956), 59–60.

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## Introduction and Current Research

The *Vulgate Cycle* (VC) is an enormous Arthurian text that was written in the French vernacular<sup>3</sup> by a number of anonymous<sup>4</sup> writers between ca. 1210 and ca. 1230. It is also referred to as the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle*, the *Prose Lancelot*, or the *Pseudo-Map Cycle*. The *Vulgate Cycle* consists of a group of medieval romances that is composed of five parts: *The Legend of the Holy Grail*, *Merlin*, *Lancelot*, *Quest to the Holy Grail*, and *The Death of Arthur*. The Cycle draws on a number of earlier sources, such as the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, especially *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* (ca. 1177) and his unfinished *Perceval, le Conte du Graal* (ca. 1180–1190).<sup>5</sup> The five parts of the VC were not written in the order they were eventually compiled in; in fact, the first two parts, which include the transportation of the Grail to England and Merlin's engineering of Arthur's becoming king, were added later. In other words, Part I, "The Legend of the Holy Grail," gives the history of the Holy Grail that the knights of the Round Table in the later parts are competing to attain. The first two parts set the historical basis for Arthur's England, which is by default a Christian territory that is fully immersed inside political issues – a secluded land that is almost free of the outside Saracen threats that take place in the first part of the *Cycle*.

The *Vulgate Cycle* historicizes England by placing its origin as early as the beginning of Christianity (time) and by transferring the Holy Grail from Palestine to the soon-to-be Christian Europe (space). This holy chalice travels from Palestine to England in the hands of early Christians: Joseph of Arimathea and his descendants.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the Grail is not only a Christian symbol that contained Christ's blood, but later it also becomes a vehicle through which British identity is formed. Moreover, the Cup of the Crucifixion develops into a symbol for King Arthur's court, knighthood, and his Round Table. According to the VC, the Grail moves to a pre-Christian England that is inhabited at that time by Muslims instead

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3 "Vulgate" in this case means the text is written in the French vernacular rather than in Latin.

4 Walter Map is one of the suggested writers. In the first pages of *The History of the Holy Grail* it is claimed God Himself wrote the work and that it was copied from a book that Christ gave the author to copy from. See opening pages of *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*, ed. Norris J. Lacy. Garland Reference Library of Humanities, 941 (New York and London: Routledge 1993), vol. 1, 3–9.

5 *Perceval, Le Conte du Graal* is the inspiration for Robert de Boron's trilogy. De Boron's trilogy consists of *Merlin and the Grail*, *Joseph of Arimathea*, and *Merlin* (*Merlin and the Grail: Joseph of Arimathea, Perceval: The Trilogy of Prose Romances Attributed to Robert de Boron*, trans. Nigel Bryant. Arthurian Studies, 48 [Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2001]).

6 The four canonical gospels identify Joseph of Arimathea as the one who buried Christ. However, there is no mention in the Gospels of the Holy Grail.

of British people. Thus, the *Vulgate Cycle* suggests that the Muslims anachronistically inhabited England at least in the first century C.E., if not also earlier. In reality, of course, Islam evolved between 610–632 C.E., which is six centuries after the date the *Cycle* suggests. Thus, the supposition of the *Vulgate Cycle* is utterly incorrect in historical and geographical terms. Paradoxically, Muslims are transposed back six centuries earlier than their actual historical existence, in addition to being misplaced geographically as pre-Christian inhabitants of England.

Insofar as the Muslims are depicted in a pre-Christian England in the *Vulgate Cycle* as opposed to their true geographical and historical contexts, the *Cycle* employs both anachronism – temporal discrepancies – and anatopism – spatial displacement – in its depiction of the Muslim Other. The idea of Christian Britishness is constructed by displacing the Muslims prior to their actual historical existence as well as moving them from East to West. The Grail is also relocated from Palestine to England (from East to West). When placed in opposition to each other, the Christians led by Joseph of Arimathea, his son Josephus, and their co-travelers vanquish the Muslims. Thus, the treatment of the Orient is already distinctly colonialist in the high Middle Ages, even in the modern sense of the word.

The argument of this paper is that that these two movements are created in order to construct an early English Christian identity as opposed to a Muslim/Saracen identity. It illustrates the Orientalist bias of the unknown author(s) of the *Cycle*. Re-reading the *Vulgate Cycle* through the lens of post-colonial theory, we can see how the movements (of the Muslims and of the Cup of the Crucifixion) before the reign of Arthur have been historicized for nationalistic purposes to enhance British identity. The Occident becomes the center, while the Orient recedes to a peripheral position. By looking at the anachronistic and the anatopistic ways the Muslims are incorporated into the *VC*, I illustrate how Muslim and British identities are created in the text.

Studies (at least in English) done on the extremely hefty *Vulgate Cycle* are proportionally few.<sup>7</sup> They mostly focus on Grail symbolism and the *VC*'s

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7 Earlier scholarship centers on the indebtedness of the *Vulgate Cycle* to Robert de Boron and to Chretien de Troyes. See, for instance, Fanni Bogdanow, "Robert de Boron's Vision of Arthurian History," *Arthurian Literature* 14 (1996): 19–52; James Douglas Bruce, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance from the Beginnings Down to the Year 1300* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1958); and *The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes: Chrétien et ses Contemporains*, ed. Norris J. Lacy, Douglas Kelly, and Keith Busby. Faux titre, 37 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987). Other scholars, such as Catherine Batt (*Malory's Morte D'Arthur: Remaking Arthurian Tradition* [New York: Palgrave, 2012]); and Charles Moorman ("Malory's Treatment of the Sankgreall," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America [PMLA]* 71 [1956]: 496–509), studied the influence of and contribution of the *Vulgate Cycle* to Thomas Malory's *Morte*. In addition to examining the origins and influences

indebtedness to earlier sources (Robert de Boron and Chrétien de Troyes) as well, which is not enough to do justice to this major romance. Whereas Chrétien focuses on how Perceval attains the Holy Grail, de Boron adapts this Grail narrative and historicizes its Palestinian origins in his *Merlin and the Grail: Joseph of Arimathea*. Robert de Boron kept his story simple and very short, as Joseph was just involved in conveying the Grail to Britain.

According to de Robert de Boron, Joseph of Arimathea saved Christ's blood after the Crucifixion in a vessel that later became known as the Holy Grail. Robert de Boron does not make Joseph of Arimathea and Josephus (as is the case in the VC) carry the vessel from Palestine to Europe; Joseph remains behind in his birthplace while the Fisher King carries the Holy Vessel to Europe.<sup>8</sup> As in Chretien's *Perceval*, Robert de Boron's *Merlin and the Grail* does not include Muslims in the picture at all. Robert de Boron was only concerned with transplanting the Holy Grail from the Near East to Europe without proposing antagonism between the two different faith groups. Hence, it is de Boron's *Merlin and the Grail* and *Joseph of Arimathea* that inspired the first part of the *Vulgate Cycle: The Legend of the Holy Grail*. The cup of the Crucifixion is used in the text to construct notions of movement and identity.

Scholarship on the *Vulgate Cycle* takes a Eurocentric approach that often overlooks how Muslims were Othered. However, after the 1980s, scholars started looking at literary texts through a nationalist lens. I would attribute that to the

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of the *Vulgate Cycle*, other scholars focused on exploring the symbol of the Holy Grail: among these are Fanni Bogdanow, *The Romance of the Grail: A Study of the Structure and Genesis of a Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Prose Romance* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1966); Juliette Wood, "The Holy Grail: From Romance Motif to Modern Genre," *Folklore* 111.2 (2000): 169–90; Frederick W. Locke, *The Quest for the Holy Grail: A Literary Study of a Thirteenth-Century French Romance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967); Carol J. Chase, "The Gateway to the Lancelot-Grail Cycle: L'Estoire del Saint Graal," *Arthurian Studies* 54 (2003): 65–74; and Kathryn Karczewska, *Prophecy and the Quest for the Holy Grail: Critiquing Knowledge in the Vulgate Cycle*. *Studies in the Humanities*, 37 (New York, Washington, DC, et al.: Peter Lang, 1998). Other intertextual studies focusing on the transformation of the texts were carried out by Jane E. Burns, *Arthurian Fictions: Rereading the Vulgate Cycle* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1985); and *The Lancelot-Grail Cycle: Text and Transformations*, ed. William W. Kibler, (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010). Also see: Friedrich Wolfzettel, "Temps et Histoire dans la Littérature Arthurienne," *Temps et Histoire dans le Roman Arthurien*, ed. Jean-Claude Façon (Toulouse: Editions Universitaires du Sud, 1999), 9–31; Elspeth Kennedy, "Who is to be Believed? Conflicting Presentations of Events in the Lancelot-Grail Cycle," *The Medieval Opus: Imitation, Rewriting, and Transmission in the French Tradition, Proceedings of the Symposium Held at the Institute for Research in the Humanities, October 5–7, 1995*, ed. Douglas Kelly. *Faux titres*, 116 (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1995), 169–80.

8 *Merlin and the Grail* (see note 5), 43.

publishing of seminal works such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978)<sup>9</sup> and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993)<sup>10</sup> as well as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983),<sup>11</sup> among others. These academic works fostered a less Eurocentric view of European medieval literature. For example, Jon Whitman<sup>12</sup> focuses on the relationship of the Grail to the Crusades, arguing that both originate in the same geographical area. The more applicable works though are *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* (2000),<sup>13</sup> *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures* (2005),<sup>14</sup> and *The Orient in Chaucer and Medieval Romance*<sup>15</sup> (2003). Influenced by this early postcolonial scholarship, I argue that anachronism and anatopism are the critical concepts that support my point.

## Anachronism, Prochronism and Anatopism

Jeremy Tambling, in the first section of his *On Anachronism*, writes that anachrony “starts with a double perception of time ... [and that it] arises from the disparity between events and their narration.”<sup>16</sup> The facetious Tambling even considers putting one's clock a few minutes earlier for the sake of punctuality to be an anachronistic act. As far as literary studies are concerned, the term anachronism is generally associated with the Renaissance; examples of scholars who viewed this time period in such anachronistic terms are Peter Burke,<sup>17</sup> Thomas Greene,<sup>18</sup> and Lucette Valensi.<sup>19</sup>

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9 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978; New York: Vintage, 1994).

10 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993; New York: Vintage, 2012).

11 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; London and New York: Verso Books, 2006).

12 Jon Whitman, “Transfers of Empire, Movements of Mind: Holy Sepulchre and Holy Grail,” *Modern Language Notes (MLN)* 123.4 (2008): 895–923.

13 *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: Palgrave 2000).

14 *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*, ed. Ananya Jahanara Kabir, and Deanne Williams. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 54 (2003; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

15 Carol Falvo Heffernan, *The Orient in Chaucer and Medieval Romance*. Studies in Medieval Romance, 1 (Suffolk, England: D. S. Brewer, 2003).

16 Jeremy Tambling, *On Anachronism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 5.

17 Peter Burke, “History as Allegory,” *Inti* 45 (1997): 337–51.

18 Thomas M. Greene, “History and Anachronism,” *Literature and History* (1986): 205–20; and “Imitation and Anachronism,” *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982).

19 Lucette Valensi, *Ces étrangers Familiers. Musulmans en Europe (XVIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris: Payot, 2012).

Perhaps the works of Shakespeare have received the most research in this aspect<sup>20</sup> The concept of anachronism is relatively less well-researched as far as the Middle Ages are concerned. Among the relatively few studies done are James Paxson's "The Structure of Anachronism and the Middle English Mystery Plays,"<sup>21</sup> which focuses more on the genre of drama than on romance. Paxson's article reacts against Phyllis Rackin's *Stages of History* (1990),<sup>22</sup> in which she mentions that, as opposed to self-conscious anachronisms in Renaissance drama, those in medieval drama were unintentional. Paxson does not read anachronism in the Corpus Christi cycles from an Occidental lens; he just focuses on the use of anachronism in the Middle English Corpus Christi cycles as a mere intention to create a "unique historisizable native ideological project."<sup>23</sup>

According to Paxson, the expression "by Mahound" that is to say "by Muhammad" – "Mahound being a variant from the name "Mohammed" – establishes York as the setting for a biblical narrative. Furthermore, Paxson overlooks the anapopism altogether. I hold that the York play of the Crucifixion suggests temporal and spatial generic shifts; the soldiers fixing the body of Christ on the Cross curse using the anachronistic phrase "by Mahound." Guy Raynaud de Lage studies the anachronistic borrowings from the Greek and Roman heritage into medieval French romances.<sup>24</sup> He comments that even the caricaturish representations of Saracens as pagans (which they are not) is acceptable because that was just the way things were.

Raymond Cormier examines these classical representations from a focused anachronistic angle.<sup>25</sup> Cormier views the mimetic anachronistic portrayal of the classical hero as a medieval baron and of the heroine as a damsel as something not only acceptable, but also as a token of harmony and symbiosis. This merging into each other of two distinct historical distances is a tendency to adumbrate the psychological concept of *Interpretatio Christiana*. Once again, Cormier doesn't touch upon the anachronisms associated with the Muslim Other. Similarly, Paul

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<sup>20</sup> Examples of this are Stephen Purcell, *Popular Shakespeare: Simulation and Subversion on the Modern Stage* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 30–55; and Elmer Edgar Stoll, "Anachronism in Shakespeare Criticism," *Modern Philology* 7.4 (1910): 557–75.

<sup>21</sup> James J. Paxson, "The Structure of Anachronism and the Middle English Mystery Plays," *Mediaevalia* 18 (1992): 321–40.

<sup>22</sup> Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

<sup>23</sup> Paxson, "The Structure of Anachronism" (see note 21).

<sup>24</sup> Guy Raynaud de Lage, *Les Romans Antiques et la Représentation de l'antiquité* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1976).

<sup>25</sup> Raymond J. Cormier, "The Problem of Anachronism: Recent Scholarship on the French Medieval Romances of Antiquity," *Philological Quarterly* 53 (Spring 1974): 145–57.

Bancourt's *Les Musulmans dans les Chansons de Geste du cycle du roi*<sup>26</sup> and Carol Chase's "Des Sarrasins à Camaalot"<sup>27</sup> do not discuss how Muslims are placed anachronistically in Camelot in the early days of Christianity when Islam in reality evolved more than half a millennium later. This prochronism (a mistake in chronological ordering) is also accompanied by an anatopism: if Muslims didn't exist historically before Christianity, then how could they have been placed in England? The study of anachronisms regarding Islamic images and concepts has been ignored by scholarship in the above mentioned medieval works, just as it has been in the *VC*.

Anatopism is even more ignored, except for a few studies done in relation to modern times and from a political point of view. An example of this scholarship is Brian J. Williams's "The Desert of Anatopism: War in the Age of Globalization."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, there is an obvious lack of scholarship on either anachronism or anatopism, and hence they have not been studied together as far as the medieval era is concerned. Virtually no anatopistic inquiries were carried out on the Middle Ages, and, of course, none have been done on the Arthurian romances or the *Vulgate Cycle*.

## The *Vulgate Cycle*

### Anachronism & Anatopism and the Construction of British Identity through Othering

The *Vulgate Cycle* was written during two contemporaneous historical events: the Crusades (1095–1291) and the Muslim presence in Andalusia (711–1492). The medieval French and Spanish songs of heroic deeds – *Les Chansons de Geste*, such as the *La Chanson de Roland* and *El Poema de Mío Cid* – focused directly on the Crusades and confrontations with Saracens/Muslims in Andalusia. However, Muslim presence in Spain was more ignored in Arthurian literature than Crusade encounters, even though they are more geographically removed. Later on in the *Cycle*, Arthur's England is depicted as a place void of religious and cultural impurities – that is to say, Muslims or Saracens. This is due to the fact that creating

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<sup>26</sup> Paul Bancourt, *Les Musulmans dans les Chansons de Geste du cycle du roi* (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1982).

<sup>27</sup> Carol Chase, "Des Sarrasins à Camaalot," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes: Journal of Medieval and Humanistic Studies* 5 (1998): 43–53.

<sup>28</sup> Brian J. Williams, "The Desert of Anatopism: War in the Age of Globalization," *American Literature* 87.2 (2015): 359–85.

a virtually European Christian territory and historicizing its very early Christian and legendary origins was perhaps a collective purpose of the *Cycle*'s numerous writers. We find no mention of the Crusades nor of Muslim presence in Andalusia even though the authors continuously alluded to Saracen Otherness. Instead, the Muslims are anatopically placed in pre-Christian, pre-Arthurian England.

Because the Grail has already been transferred to their European native land, the knights of the Round Table do not "hit the road" to Jerusalem to fight the Muslim Other during the Crusades in the *Vulgate Cycle*. The latter had been transposed to an earlier historical epoch and had already been vanquished on English soil centuries ago, as the *VC* posits. Enjoying the privilege of traversing their English native territory, the knights of the Round Table do not even leave their homeland centuries earlier.

However, in an interesting reversal, the historical Josephus (Palestinian by birth and ethnicity) embarks on a journey across the sea from his home city, Jerusalem, to England in an ark carrying with him a holy vessel that had once contained Christ's blood. Not only does Joseph of Arimathea bring the Savior's dish, but his Palestinian co-travelers will later also populate the land. Josephus and his men approach the English shores and find them populated with Saracens; like the Israelites, Josephus and his men view it as their "Promised Land," a space in which new imperial endeavors can take place. These Palestinians, I conjecture, are the carriers of the Holy Grail and from whose lineage comes Galahad,<sup>29</sup> the only knight in King Arthur's retinue who can cure the maimed Fisher King and achieve the honor of attaining the Holy Grail. These Christian Palestinian immigrants to England consider their destination "land promised to us and our descendants." And, paradoxically, it is these Palestinians who purge England from the Muslim Saracens who already populate it. After Josephus and some of his followers miraculously cross the sea without a ship and arrive in England, the Lord talks to him promising him that: "Que ceste terre ou tu es uenus est promise a ton lignage por acroistre [&] mouteplier le [pais] de gent plus couenable quil ni a" [this land where you have come is promised to your descendants, who are to increase and to fill the country with people more fitting than those who are there now].<sup>30</sup>

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**29** Nascien had several dreams about his lineage and about Galahad being one of his descendants. Heinrich Oskar Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1908–1916), vol. 1, 212; *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*, ed. Norris J. Lacy. Garland Reference Library of Humanities, 941 (New York and London: Routledge 1993), vol. 1, 118.

**30** Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (see note 29), vol. 1, 212; Lacy, ed., *The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (see note 29), vol. 1, 120.

After hearing the Lord's voice, Josephus tells his companions:

Quant iosephes entent la parole si se lieue esraument de la terre si regarde uers le chiel & dist. sire vees chi vees chi uostre sergant apparellies a faire ce que vous commanderes. Lors sen tourney uers son pere & envers ses parents & lor dist. signor noueles vous sai a dire boines & beles & meruelleuses. vees chi la terre qui promise nous est a nous et a nos hoirs . si couient quele soit edefije . & plantee de noueles plantes & de nouiaus arbres. Car tout ausi com mescreance est maluaise loy. Crestiene qui est boine & nete & saine a la uie pardurable si voel ie quele y soit plantee & enrachinee & ostee cele qui ore i est.

[After hearing this, Josephus stood up, looked toward the heavens, and said, "Lord, your servant is here, ready to do what you command." Then he turned toward his father and his relatives and said, "My lords, I have wonderful news for you. This is the land that is promised to us and our descendants. It is therefore fitting that it be planted with new trees: since unbelief and false religion are firmly held here, it is fitting that Jesus Christ's faith, which is good and right for eternal life, be planted and raised and rooted here, and that the Saracen faith, which is cultivated and upheld here, be removed."]<sup>31</sup>

The *Lancelot-Grail Cycle* posits that the gerontogeous Christian immigrants (who later on become the ancestors of the British nobility) must vanquish their Muslim Saracen adversaries who are already settled in England. This Christian movement/victory has to happen in order for British identity to flourish. The British landscape, in a sense, becomes a "palimpsest"<sup>32</sup> on whose territories the misplaced and mistimed Muslims are replaced by the more modern Christian English people.

The contact zone<sup>33</sup> with the Muslim adversary (which doesn't really exist at this time) is anatopistically or spatially transferred to the more familiar space of Britain instead of the much more distant contemporary Muslim Jerusalem. Because the reader is aware of the impossibility of the existence of that Muslim Other in this European spot, this anatopism somehow dilutes the impending Muslim threat. Seconding Geraldine Heng's theory that medieval romances (such as those of King Arthur in Geoffrey of Monmouth) arose in reaction to the Crusades,<sup>34</sup> I argue that medieval audiences would have (unconsciously) read these anatopistic and anachronistic features in the VC as promoting nationalistic values against the Saracen adversary, whether in Spain or Jerusalem.

<sup>31</sup> Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (see note 29), vol. 1, 212; Lacy, ed., *The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (see note 29), vol. 1, 120.

<sup>32</sup> For more on the concept of palimpsest in culture see Sarah Dillon, *The Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory* (London, New Delhi, New York, and Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> For more on this concept, see Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991): 33–40.

<sup>34</sup> Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).



Jerusalem was still thought to be the center of the world as illustrated by many world maps (*mappaemundi*)<sup>35</sup> at that point.<sup>36</sup> The Hereford mappamundi (ca. 1300) and the Bunting Clover Leaf Map (1581), for instance, show Jerusalem in the center of the world. The VC moves this center of the world, Jerusalem, to the periphery, and this periphery later on becomes the center. Other maps would depict Europe being the center with monsters living on its geographical peripheries, such as the monsters in the illustrated manuscript of *Wonders of the East*. In his essay “Time and Space in Late-Medieval Dynastic Chronicles: With a Focus on Examples from Czech-Language Literature” in this volume, Jiří Koten argues that a “discontinuity between the Christian world and unknown foreign lands reflects the medieval ‘bipolar’ view of the world as center and periphery, the world of Christians and non-believers, a microcosm and macrocosm.” This is so much in keeping with my argument here; as in the VC, early Christians travel from the Orient to the Occident carrying the Grail with them making England (and Europe) central. Moreover, the act of vanquishing the anachronistic Saracens on English soil makes England even more central, further confirming this bipolar microsmic versus macrocosmic view of Koten’s.

In addition, the Saracens are not only anatopically transformed to England so that they can be violently vanquished on English soil, which diminishes the possibility that one day they could be an impending threat to the British nation, but are said to belong to pre-Christian times. Thus, in addition to the erroneous geographical misplacement that the text introduces, there is also substantial anachronism or prochronism. Prochronism is an impossible anachronism, which occurs when an object or idea has not yet been invented when the situation takes place – and, therefore, could not have possibly existed at the time. Prochronism is anachronism of ideas; in this case, Islam is used prochronistically. The *Vulgate Cycle* states that Joseph of Arimathea was born and came to Jerusalem seven full years before Christ was crucified, but he can still meet with the “Mohamadians” or the “Saracens” as the text refers to them. Obviously, here is an intentional prochronism that erroneously outstretches the beginnings of the Islamic rivalry to six centuries earlier than its actual evolution in the early seventh century. Hence, according to the VC, Islam preceded Christianity and not the other way around. The first part of the VC states that on their way to England, Joseph of Arimathea and his men land on the Island of Sarras:

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35 For more on this particular point, consult the contributions in this volume by Na’ama Shulman and Romedio Schmitz-Esser.

36 Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

Et por le grignor partie prent on le tout. & por ce nest il pas droit que il soient dit sarrasin de lor meire & ce fut la premiere cites ou lor loy fu establie desi a la uenue de mohammet.

[And in this city was founded and established the sect that the Saracens maintained until the coming of Mohammed, who was sent to save them, though he damned himself first, and them afterwards, by his gluttony. Before the founding of the sect, the people of Sarra had no faith, but worshiped everything that pleased them, so that what they worshiped one day was not worshiped the next. But then they established the worship of the sun and the moon and the other planets].<sup>37</sup>

In the third part of the VC, the Old Lady whom Lancelot meets at Galehaut's tomb tells him that:

Et sacies ke cou est la plus rice del monde] Et elle fu faite pour le roy vrbaduc. Que paien & sarrasin aouroient a qui cils castiaus estoit ancois que ioseph darimachie y uenist. Et enfroyent chaiens le roy dedens la tombe. Qui puis par homme ne fu remuee. De ceste auenture fuancelos moult lies. Se fist la tombe desfoir de la ou elle estoit mise.

[You should realize that it's the most splendid tomb in the world and was made for King Narbaduc, who was the author of the law upheld by the Saracens after Mohammed. This castle was the pagan's mosque before Joseph of Arimathea arrived in this country; they buried the king inside and placed him in the tomb, which they considered holy. But with the advent of Christianity, the body was removed and thrown into the moats beyond the city].<sup>38</sup>

The oxymoronic expression that the Old Lady uses, “pagan's mosque,” is consistent with the text erroneously identifying the Saracens/Muslims as practicing idolatry as well as heliolatry. There is almost a unanimous consensus in medieval writings – such as *King Horn*, *Le Chanson de Roland*, and *Floris and Blanchefleur* – that the monotheistic Muslims are idolaters, pagans, and heliolaters. Hence the above-mentioned anachronisms and anatropisms are but a symptom of a falsified understanding/representation of the Muslim Other.

Moreover, anachronistically and anatopically speaking, these Muslims are also said to have constructed numerous “pagan mosques” in Camelot – the richest of the pagan cities:

il errerent tant quil vindrent a vne chite que on a peloit kaamalot & che estoit la plus rice cite que li sarrasin eussent en la grant bartaigne. & estoit de si grant auctorite que li roi I estoient corone . & i estoit la mahoumerie plus grant & plus haute quen nule autre cyte qui el roialme fust.

<sup>37</sup> Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (see note 29), vol. 1, 21; Lacy, ed., *The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (see note 29), vol. 1, 15. The English quote has more details. Apparently, Norris Lacy was using another manuscript.

<sup>38</sup> Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (see note 29), vol. 4, 317; Lacy, ed., *The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (see note 29), vol. 3, 69.

[until [Josephus and his men] came to a city called Camelot. It was the richest of the Saracen cities in Great Britain, and it was so important that the pagan kings were crowned there, and its mosque was larger and taller than many other city].<sup>39</sup>

In a patriotic and decisive gesture that implements a Christian and a new European identity,

Qtirije si commanda iosephes a battre le temple as paiens qui estoit fondez en la cyte de caamalot. & fist faire el milieu de la uille vne eglise en lonor de saint esteue le martir.

[Josephus ordered the pagan temples that had been built in the city of Camelot knocked down, the idols burned, and all the edifices of the pagan religion completely destroyed. In the middle of the city he had the Church of Saint Stephen the Martyr built].<sup>40</sup>

Even before reaching England, the conversion process had begun. King Avalach of the Saracens easily converts to Christianity by Joseph of Arimathea's hand.<sup>41</sup> That is perhaps more sophisticated or more suited to the times because they are able to vanquish the Muslim Other easily by introducing them to the new Christian faith. The Muslims as a whole showed little intellectual resistance when they allowed the Christians to overwrite the teachings of Mohammed. The first part of the *VC* details the stories of other Saracen rulers who convert to Christianity; among them are Duke Ganor, Matagran, and King Orcant.

Duke Ganor's conversion is an example of how the new Britons (the Palestinian Galileans by origin) are superior to the Saracens. The new Britons belong to a religious tradition that is more sophisticated as they can vanquish the Muslim Other when introducing their Christian faith as opposed to that of Mohammed without much intellectual resistance of the other party. As I mentioned above, this is evident in the case of King Evalach and his wife, as it is obvious in the conversion of Duke Ganor. Duke Ganor and his people lack the skill of dream interpretation, so they have to resort to Christians to decipher and interpret the Duke's dream. Like the biblical Joseph of the Book of Genesis, who was able to decode the dream of Pharaoh, Josephus can foretell the Duke's future. This Christian knowledge gives these Christians cultural and intellectual advantages over

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<sup>39</sup> Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (see note 29), vol. 1, 244; Lacy, ed., *The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (see note 29), vol. 1, 136. Even though both texts almost give the same meaning, the English text is only an approximate translation of the French original. Apparently, Norris was using another manuscript.

<sup>40</sup> Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (see note 29), vol. 1, 246; Lacy, ed., *The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (see note 29), vol. 1, 137.

<sup>41</sup> Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (see note 29), vol. 1, 66–69 for the conversion to Christianity of Evalach's wife. Lacy, ed., *The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (see note 29), vol. 1, 15–22 and 42–46.

their colonized subjects who eventually become dependent on them for spiritual counseling.

The British identity, at least in its earliest stages as the *VC* suggests, becomes a Christian one by default – that is to say, it is based on religious premises just as that of the Saracens' is. The Lord commands Josephus to appoint a bishop as ruler of every town and the tradition of anointing kings is also traced back to him:

Qvant iosephes fu assis en la chaire. Si uindrent tuit li angele deuant lui. & nostre sires lenoinst & sacra en tel maniere comme on doit euesque sacrer & enoindre si que tous li pueples le uit apertement & icele onction don't il fu enoins fu prins en lampoule que li angeles portoit que il prist & atraist a soi quant il vaut entrer en larche. & en apres furent enoint tout li roi des ce que li crestientes vin ten la grant bartaigne dusques a uterpandragon qui fu peires au roi artu.

[When Josephus was seated on the throne, all the angels came before him. And Our Lord anointed and consecrated him in the way a bishop should be, so that all the people saw it clearly. The unction with which he was anointed was taken from the ampulla the angel was carrying – the angel who had taken him and held him by the shoulders when he tried to enter the ark, as you heard earlier. And with this same unction were anointed all the kings from the time Christianity came to England until the time of Pendragon, who was King Arthur's father].<sup>42</sup>

Among other things, British identity in this text is defined in terms of the relation to the Muslim Other. Unlike the Muslims who are identified as ancient inhabitants of the British Isles, the Britons are depicted as more socially and spiritually sophisticated ones who belong to the late Anglo-Saxon period. Unlike the wobbly beliefs of the Saracens who easily convert to Christianity and don't seem that grounded because they belong to a shaky faith, the English by contrast are organized around ideas that constitute Britishness such as Christianity and chivalry. We are mainly introduced to the higher social class of knights and noblemen as opposed to a less stratified Saracen one. By placing the British in the text as citizens of a higher social class in addition to depicting them as more recent in historical context puts them in a more favorable light. In addition to the concept of knighthood, British knights are also united around other noble ideas and causes such as those of attaining the Holy Grail (sign of the covenant between God and his chosen people) and serving the Round Table (fashioned after the Table of the Last Supper). It is worth mentioning here that these images echo

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<sup>42</sup> Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (see note 29), vol. 1, 36; Lacy, ed., *The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (see note 29), vol. 1, 26.

Christian apocrypha,<sup>43</sup> and it is around such Christian imagery that the English people unite and a British identity, which is Christian by default, is constructed.

It might be a bit of a stretch, it might be even “anachronistic,” to think of the Grail and the Round Table as unifying cultural signifiers for the British people. Benedict Anderson in his *Imagined Communities* argues that nations need literature and history in order to create cultural poetics that solidify that imagined sense of nationhood. Anderson defines the concept of nationalism as a modern or an ‘early modern’ notion that happened due to the birth of subjectivity, the nation, capitalism, as well as the concepts of race and racism. Divisions between premodern and modern have also frequently been used to classify cultures, with the West depicted as the birthplace and standard-bearer of modernity and other “backwards,” “primitive,” or “developing” cultures lagging behind as their geographic and cultural differences come to be represented as temporal, denying these cultures and peoples their coevalness and their equality.

Scholars such as Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman in *King Arthur and the Myth of History* venture to apply Anderson’s theory of nationhood to medieval Arthurian literature. Others such as Scott Kleinman<sup>44</sup> and Margaret Lamont<sup>45</sup> shy away from taking the risk of applying a modern concept such as “nationhood” to medieval works. According to Kleinman and Lamont, it is safer to read Layamon’s *Brut*<sup>46</sup> (ca. 1190–1215), for instance, as a text promoting a regional identity of ethnic groups such as Scots, Picts, Danes, and others inhabited England at that time. Arthur is the one who allegedly forged the idea of a British identity, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*. According to Lamont, no such thing as a single political identity existed for the British at the time, and Englishmen were a mix of races in the *Brut*. Kleinman holds that the Scandinavians were eventually able to assimilate in the *Brut* even though they are regarded by Geoffrey of Monmouth as “transient invaders.” Kathy Cawsey, in her “Disorienting Orientalism: Finding Saracens in Strange Places in Late Medieval English Manuscripts,”<sup>47</sup>

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43 Norris J. Lacy et al., ed., *The New Arthurian Encyclopedia*: New Edition (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), 497.

44 Scott Kleinman, “The Ædelen of Engle: Constructing Ethnic and Regional Identities in La3amon’s *Brut*,” *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 16.1 (2004): 95–130.

45 Margaret Lamont, “Becoming English: Ronwenne’s Wassail, Language, and National Identity in the Middle English Prose *Brut*,” *Studies in Philology* 107.3 (2010): 283–309.

46 *The Brut* is another Arthurian text that is translated from the *Roman de Brut* by Wace.

47 Kathy Cawsey, “Disorienting Orientalism: Finding Saracens in Strange Places in Late Medieval English Manuscripts,” *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 21.4 (2009): 380–97.

explores Orientalist hybrid portrayals of the Viking-Saracen *Other* in late medieval English works.

The xenophobic mindset antagonistic to the Northern pagan of earlier medieval times, according to Cawsey, metamorphoses into a fear of the Muslim adversary in Spain and Jerusalem. I would argue, the Scandinavians eventually converted to Christianity and hence were able to hybridize in the melting pot of the forming British identity. Even though Geoffrey of Monmouth places the Scandinavians anachronistically and as invaders, later Arthurian writers, such as Wace, were more sympathetic toward them. On the other hand, Saracens belonged to another faith and were thus misrepresented more severely; they were not only placed erroneously in terms of time and space but were also annihilated in the first part of the *Vulgate Cycle*.

The Muslim Other is also further marginalized when his identity is put in juxtaposition with his Jewish counterpart, who is part of the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle*, Joseph of Arimathea and his followers visit the mystical island of Sarras on their way from Palestine to England. The writer of this volume of the VC states – clearly relying on a false etymology – that the island takes its name from Sarah, Isaac's mother; but because the Jews came from Sarah's lineage, it is important to note that she is not responsible for the Saracens taking their name from her.<sup>48</sup> Thus, according to the *Vulgate* writer, Muslims are unworthy to be associated with this biblical matriarch from whose son Isaac's lineage Jesus descends and hence the Saracen identity is further marginalized from the mainstream Judeo-Christian tradition. Even though the Jewish Other is portrayed in the text as the killer of Christ, Jews, like Christians, belong to the same tradition, the Judeo-Christian, and they share common sections of the Bible. However, Christians became God's new favorites when compared with the previous ones lost in the desert for forty years. The Holy Spirit speaks to the Christians telling them they are God's new favorites, thus marginalizing the Muslims and Jews from God's favoritism.<sup>49</sup>

In order to construct oneself as a nation, one has to do this in opposition to others. That is why it is no wonder that Arthurian writers would place the Islamic age back to first-century C.E. because, according to the legend, that was the time Arthur was constructing a nation. That is to say, the term modern existed as early as European writers were not able to define that Other; they could not come to terms with his position on this globe and were hesitant about where and when

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<sup>48</sup> Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (see note 29), vol. 1, 21; Lacy, ed., *The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (see note 29), vol. 1, 15.

<sup>49</sup> Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (see note 29), vol. 1, 31; Lacy, ed., *The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (see note 29), vol. 1, 23.

to place their fellow Muslims in terms of history and geography; hence, they composed these anachronisms and anapropisms. In the first part of the *Vulgate Cycle*, once the identity of this Muslim Other is established in antagonism with the new Christian British identity, transcontinental movements that contribute to identity cease to occur in the later parts of the *Cycle*. In the later parts of the *Cycle*, the Arthurian knights are ensconced in the European territory. There is less havoc in the region, and the tone is more relaxed as the British identity had already been forged a few centuries prior to this through the movement of both people and objects from East to West.

## Postcoloniality and Bakhtin's Chronotope in the *Vulgate Cycle*

The *Vulgate Cycle* focuses – even if just implicitly – on establishing a British identity for its readers. Although this is a French text, it defines British<sup>50</sup> and European identity against the Muslim Other. This in itself may seem anachronistic, but the VC can be defined as a postcolonial work since the major characteristic of postcoloniality<sup>51</sup> is the search for identity. Literature is to be viewed as an expression of identity in general, regardless of who is in power. And since identity is continuously forming, writers tweak the positions of the identity points representing themselves as well as the Other on the axes of time and space. The *Vulgate Cycle* is a very lively example of such fictive temporal and spatial adjustments made in order to find a place for the upcoming empire as the Muslims and the Grail are taken out of their temporal and geographical contexts in order to formulate a British identity. Modern works written in the “peripheries of the world,” or by non-European people in the diaspora, would be understood as works counter-acting canonical western ones. If one is to consider the medieval VC as a text written when the world was run by Muslims, one can assume that it was reacting to certain circulating notions at the time.

According to Edward Said, one of the responsibilities of a critic is what he calls “contemporary critical consciousness,”<sup>52</sup> which is to reread texts and

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<sup>50</sup> For Celtic origins of Arthurian tales, see Jean Markale, *King of the Celts: Arthurian Legends and Celtic Tradition* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions/Bear & Co, 1993).

<sup>51</sup> For a thorough definition of the use of the term post-colonial versus postcolonial in precolonial times, see Vijay Mishra, and Bob Hodge, “What is Post (-) Colonialism?” *Textual Practice* 5.3 (1991): 399–414.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (see note 9), 1979.

discover “what they don’t say.”<sup>53</sup> Another thing that Arthurian texts barely mention is the presence of the Muslims in Spain. In his *Historia Regnum Britannia*, Geoffrey of Monmouth only fleetingly states that Arthur would have control over Spain,<sup>54</sup> but no clear reference is made that he is actually vanquishing the colonizers. Similarly, the trauma of the Muslim presence has been exorcised and represented instead anachronistically and anatopically. I would argue that this is a constructed discourse in which there were attempts of envisioning the Orient as an “imaginative geography”<sup>55</sup> represented in a manner that is both anachronistic and anatopic.

In “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics,” Mikhail Bakhtin viewed time in spatial terms in his reading of post-medieval works, namely those of the modern Russian Fyodor Dostoyevsky and the Renaissance French writer François Rabelais. Bakhtin views the literary chronotope as a time and space combination that is fundamental to our understanding of reality:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. The intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.<sup>56</sup>

It is this correlation and connectedness between time and space that forms our understanding of reality. Forming our understanding of reality, I take this particular idea of time and space a step further and question how the temporal and spatial misplacement of the Muslims/Saracens affected the European view of them. I incorporate this Bakhtinian concept of the chronotope with Michael Foucault’s view of knowledge, dialectics of power, and discourse that he brings up in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). Edward Said depends heavily on Foucault’s concept to formulate his theory in his *Orientalism*.

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<sup>53</sup> Similarly, contemporary African-American writer Toni Morrison, in her *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, argues that sometimes we do not talk about the most important things in our writing and that is why the issue of slavery and slave voices have for decades been silenced in American writing.

<sup>54</sup> The *Vulgate Cycle* is a French text that depicts British (and European identity). Because France is geographically close to the Spain occupied by the Muslims in Andalusia, we find ample negative references to Saracens; counteracting to this is Sir Thomas Malory, who does not mention this adversary, even though the VC is one of the sources he draws from in his *Morte d’Arthur*.

<sup>55</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (see note 9).

<sup>56</sup> Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (1975, Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2010). The essay I am referring to here is “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,” 120.



I propose that instead of depicting the Middle East as a locale in the Eastern part of the globe, the *Vulgate Cycle* anatopically displaces the “Saracens” to the British Isles as well as it transfers the Muslim’s existence to at least the first century of the current era, that is to say seven centuries earlier before the actual advent of Islam. Said states in his *Orientalism* that the Orient was always depicted as an ancient locale; namely, it is ancient in terms of time, as the contemporary readers of the VC would have viewed the Muslims in an ancient light. As opposed to this, the British Christian knights of Arthur are more modern – which is the flipside of Said’s argument.

The Orient with its Muslim people, hence, is transposed for political reasons and not for fictional ones only. Not only is this temporal demarcation between East and West evident, but the East is separate from the West in terms of space. The West and East are depicted as separate spaces that are defined by inclusion and exclusion.<sup>57</sup> The East is engulfed with its ancient history in the West through the transposition of the Grail. The East is also excluded from the West by defining Eastern monotheistic Muslim people as pagans and transferring the Grail to the European Christendom.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the *Vulgate Cycle* is a story that transposes the Holy Grail from the Orient to the Occident.<sup>58</sup> The Grail is not the only transposed item, however; the Saracens are also moved to an earlier time in England. This is an interesting episode that is peculiar to the *Vulgate Cycle* and doesn’t exist in the source text of Robert de Boron, which is not as nationalistic as the *Vulgate Cycle* is. Doing these displacements so unintentionally creates an anachronistic and anatopistic colonialist discourse of how the British identity is constructed. These anachronistic and anatopistic details show us how the rest of Europe sensed its geographically adjacent adversaries, the Muslims, misrepresenting them both spatially and

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<sup>57</sup> See also Ann Scott’s contribution in this volume, “Spatial Configurations, Movement, and Identity in Chaucer’s Romances,” where she applies Henri Lefebvre’s theory of space. See also the introduction to the present volume by Albrecht Classen. Cf. also his lengthy introduction to *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen, with the collaboration of Christopher R. Clason. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 9 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012).

<sup>58</sup> Carol Chase, “Des Sarrasins à Camaalot,” *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes: Journal of Medieval and Humanistic Studies* 5 (1998): 43–53.

chronologically. If the “axes of time and space” – to put it in Bakhtin’s words – are tilted when understanding a certain reality about someone, then our whole conception of them and their identity becomes erroneous.

Based on Said’s take on Orientalism, I argue that anachronism and anatopism are tools deployed in order to formulate a certain kind of negative discourse about Muslims that circulated in medieval Europe. Moving the Grail from Palestine to Europe, moving the Saracens to Pre-Christian England, and vilifying them are misrepresentations through time and space. I take this particular idea of time and space a step further, as the *VC* definitely contributed an erroneous Muslim identity in the conception of European audiences. This also helped in their construction of a Christian British identity for nationalistic purposes in opposition to an anachronistic and anatopistic Muslim one that was a threat to the stability of Britain and Europe at the time the *VC* was compiled. As Winston Churchill states in my second opening quotation above, the British people prefer to hold the belief that that Arthur existed. Perhaps Arthur did, but it was through making anachronistic and anatopistic revisions in the *VC* that a sense of a British national identity was further forged.

Albrecht Classen

# Traveling to/in the North During the Middle Ages

The World of Northern Europe in Medieval and Early Modern Travel Narratives

## Introduction and Current Research

The history of travel has always attracted much attention because the travelers or the travelogue authors – some of them writing only from their armchairs, that is, on the basis of previously published narratives, such as John Mandeville – intentionally, or simply by default, reflected on intercultural experiences. Travel implies that one departs from a familiar environment and enters a new territory where things are different, whether dramatically or only by degree. The distance from home would not necessarily determine the extent to which one would realize cultural difference.

In light of a huge corpus of relevant text, we can safely argue by now that the Middle Ages were not an immobile world, considering the large number of travelers already in the early centuries, whose ranks swelled extensively in the following period, reaching enormous proportions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Some travelogues were determined by religious purposes, others reflected primarily mercantile interests, but then there are also those written by diplomats and other politicians, by representatives of the Church, by scholars and humanists, by medical doctors or artists. Some travel narratives are characterized by literary qualities, and others are mostly factual, but they all allow us to gain insight into medieval mental structures, in concepts of space, and hence also into forms of identity.

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<sup>1</sup> Norbert Ohler, *The Medieval Traveller*, trans. Caroline Hillier (1986; Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: Boydell, 1989); Folker Reichert, *Erfahrung der Welt: Reisen und Kulturbegegnung im späten Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001); Laura Schlesinger, *Reisen und Reiseliteratur im Mittelalter und Neuzeit: eine Bibliographie* (Hamburg: Ed. Loges, 2011). See now also Shayne Aaron Legassie, *The Medieval Invention of Travel* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017); cf. my review in *Mediaevistik* 30 (forthcoming). He offers many good insights, but also proves to be rather repetitive and often argues as if he were the first to write about medieval travel literature. Much recent research on this topic is simply not included here.

Even if a large percentage of the European population was bound to the soil, working as farmers, and hence hardly ever leaving the own parochial domain, the medieval roads were virtually crowded with travelers, such as merchants, students, professors, artists, masons, scientists, medical doctors, kings and their entourage, clerics, crusaders, knights, and especially pilgrims. Much of our recent research has focused on travels to the hundreds of pilgrimage sites throughout Europe, and especially to the Holy Land. Santiago de Compostela, Rome, and Jerusalem were, so to speak, the hot spots of medieval religious tourism and hardly ever lost their universal appeal.<sup>2</sup> But we have also increasingly learned to understand that a fairly large number of travelers actually went far beyond the scope of medieval Europe, and explored the Middle East, India, and even China, and this already since the twelfth century.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, we begin to comprehend how much medieval Arab travelers explored Christian Europe, after all and went as far north as modern-day Poland, Germany, and the Netherlands.<sup>4</sup> To complement this universal picture, we also would have to consider the intensive travel activities by the Jewish population, although this was often not on a voluntary basis because they were repeatedly forced to leave their homes and to find a new

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**2** *Wallfahrt und Kulturbeggnung: Das Rheinland als Ausgangspunkt und Ziel spätmittelalterlicher Pilgerreisen*, ed. Helmut Brall-Tuchel. Schriften des Heimatvereins der Erkelenzer Lande e.V., 26 (Erkelenz: Heimatverein der Erkelenzer Lande, e.V., 2012).

**3** Marina Münkler, *Erfahrung des Fremden: Die Beschreibung Ostasiens in den Augenzeugenberichten des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2000); Antti Ruotsala, *Europeans and Mongols in the Middle of the Thirteenth Century: Encountering the Other*. Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemian Toimituksia. Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Sarja-ser. Humaniora, nide-tom, 314 (Helsinki: The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 2001); *Marco Polo and the Encounter of East and West*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Amilcare Iannucci (Toronto, Buffalo, NY, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Folker Reichert, *Asien und Europa im Mittelalter: Studien zur Geschichte des Reisens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014). See also the contribution to the present volume by Romedio Schmitz-Esser.

**4** See, for instance, Nazik Saba Yared, *Arab Travellers and Western Civilization*, trans. from the Arabic by Sumayya Damluji Shahbandar. Rev. and ed. by Tony P. Naufal and Jana Gough (London: Saqi Books, 1996); Touati Houari, *Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (2000; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010); *Ibn Fadlān and the Land of Darkness: Arab Travellers in the Far North*, trans. with an intro. by Paul Lunde and Aroline Stone (London: Penguin, 2012); *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century*, rev. ed., with a new preface by Ross E. Dunn (1986; Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA, and London: University of California Press, 2005). Cf. also the contributions to *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 14 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), especially my own introduction, "Encounters Between East and West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Many Untold Stories About Connections and Contacts, Understanding and Misunderstanding," 1–122; here 24–41.

place in different countries with a higher level of toleration.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, this also meant that a large group of people of Jewish descent was constantly on the move throughout Europe, especially since their profession was based on selling merchandise and on financial lending.<sup>6</sup>

Recent years have also witnessed the opening up of our perspectives toward travel between Western Europe and Asia, for which Marco Polo continues to be best known, of course. Travelers, however, pursue many different ways, and just as today, in the Middle Ages people moved toward those goals that proved to be most profitable, exciting, and luring for them, and offered a safe space, or new land, etc. Economic, military, political, and religious purposes guided most travelers, and we would have to wait until the early sixteenth century to come across a literary figure, Fortunatus in the eponymous early modern German novel by an anonymous (1509), who traveled primarily just to visit as many different countries as possible, not driven by religious or monetary interests. But Fortunatus represents an exception; he is the figure of literary imagination since he owns a magical purse that allows him to draw as much money as he wants. This allows him to travel simply for travel's sake. He does not shy away from pilgrimage sites, but his primary purpose is to visit as many countries both in the West and in the

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<sup>5</sup> For a solid overview of the relevant aspects and the most important contributions to this research field, see Romedio Schmitz-Esser, "Travel and Exploration in the Middle Ages," *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), vol. 3, 1680–704. See also the comprehensive *Trade, Travel, and Exploration in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. John Block Friedman and Kristen Mossler Figg (New York and London: Garland, 2000). See now the contributions to *Welterfahrung und Welterschließung in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Anna Kathrin Bleuler, together with Anja-Mareike Klingbeil. Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit, 5 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016); *On the Road in the Name of Religion: Pilgrimage as a Means of Coping with Contingency and Fixing the Future in the World's Major Religions*, ed. Klaus Herbers and Hans Christian Lehner. Beiträge zur Hagiographie, 15 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014); *On the Road in the Name of Religion II: Ways and Destinations in Comparative Perspective – Medieval Europe and Asia*, ed. Klaus Herbers and Hans Christian Lehner. Beiträge zur Hagiographie, 17 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Martin Jacobs, *Reorienting the East: Jewish Travelers to the Medieval Muslim World*. Jewish Culture and Contexts (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Judah b. Samuel he-Hasid, ed. and trans. by Abraham Benisch; in collaboration with William F. Ainsworth, *Travels of Rabbi Petachia of Ratisbon: Who, in the Latter End of the Twelfth Century, Visited Poland, Russia, Little Tartary, the Crimea, Armenia, Assyria, Syria, the Holy Land, and Greece*. Gorgias Historic Travels in the Cradle of Civilization, 31 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012); see also Albrecht Classen, "Encounters Between East and West" (see note 4), 68–77.

East as possible out of sheer curiosity.<sup>7</sup> His endless financial resources make this possible, which would not be the case for most other people (491).

## Travel To and Through Northern Europe

We tend to trace and study mostly those travelers who went from the west and aimed for the east, or southeast, going on pilgrimages or crusades, or on those travelers, turning to the early modern time, who went from Europe to the New World, hence toward the west. By contrast, there is considerably less interest in those travelers who made their way toward the north, i.e., the Scandinavian countries, then Finland, Lapland, northern Russia, Iceland, and Greenland. Nevertheless, there was much more travel going on within that world than often assumed, commonly associated with the Vikings. Moreover, the trade in stones and timber between places such as Gotland and the continent was quite extensive, as we can learn from historical documents and archeological excavations.<sup>8</sup> Some of the most common imports from the north were walrus tusks (ivory), furs, skin, wax, honey, and the like.

One of the earliest Nordic travelogues is included in a later translation of the highly popular *Historiarum adversum Paganos Libri Septem* (ca. 250 manuscripts)

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted from *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller. Bibliothek der frühen Neuzeit: Abt. 1, Literatur im Zeitalter des Humanismus und der Reformation, 1. Bibliothek deutscher Klassiker, 54 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1990), 385–585; Albrecht Classen, *The German Volksbuch. A Critical History of a Late-Medieval Genre*. Studies in German Language and Literature, 15 (Lewiston, NY, Queenston, Ont., and Lampeter, Wales: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, reissued 1999), 163–83.

<sup>8</sup> *Language Contact Through Trade in the Late Middle Ages: Middle Low German and Other North European Languages*: special issue, ed. Laura Wright and Ernst Håkon Jahr. *Multilingua*, 16.4 (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1997); Lars Berggren and Annette Landen, “Stones and Timber, Scandinavian Trade in,” *Trade, Travel, and Exploration in the Middle Ages* (see note 5), 584–86. See now also *The Dynamics of Economic Culture in the North Sea- and Baltic Region in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, ed. Hanno Brand. Groninger Hanze Studies, 2 (Hilversum: Uitg. Verloren, 2007); *East Anglia and Its North Sea World in the Middle Ages*, ed. David Bates and Robert Liddiard (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 2013); Sverre Bagge, *Cross and Scepter: The Rise of the Scandinavian Kingdoms from the Vikings to the Reformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); see now the contributions to *Visions of North in Premodern Europe*, ed. Dolly Jørgensen and Virginia Langum. *Cursor Mundi*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), where the emphasis is more historical and covers the long view from ancient Greece to eighteenth-century France. By contrast, my own study here covers material not included in that volume. The literature on this topic is legion, of course, but here I pursue a more mental-historical approach.

by Paulus Orosius (d. 420), or a ‘World History from the Creation to the year 471 C.E.,’ which King Alfred the Great (871–899) had commissioned to be rendered from the Latin into Anglo-Saxon ca. 890, a task which he might have carried out himself. The account by Ohthere of Hålogaland, included only in this text, was the result of his visit to King Alfred’s court and appears to have been his response to curious questions about his wealth, his position back home, and his travel experiences concerning his voyage from northern Norway toward the North Cape into the White Sea.

This Norwegian, who had originated from the vicinity of Tromsø, in southern Troms county, northern Norway, later also reached Truso in present day Poland. Orosius himself provided a fairly detailed record of the geographical outline of northern Europe, even beyond the continent, for instance: “To the east and north of them are the North-Danes both on the main lands, and on the islands.... The North Danes have to their north the same arm of the sea which is called the *Ostsæ* ... ”<sup>9</sup> Further north live, as we are told, the Swedes, the Sermende, and the Norwegians.

Next then follows the text by Ohthere who “lived in the north of Norway on the coast of the Atlantic.... He told how he once wished to find out how far the land extended due north, or whether anyone lived to the north of the unpopulated area” (18). Ohthere encountered vast expanses of mostly empty land along the coast of the Antarctic Sea: “He had not previously come across any settled district since he left his own home, but had, the whole way, land to starboard that was uninhabited apart from fishers and bird-catchers and hunters, and they were all *Finns*” (19). As to Norway itself, Oh there emphasized that there was only little arable land along the coastline, while the huge and unpopulated mountain ranges to the east made travel almost impossible (21).

It hardly needs mention that this travelogue represents a great exception, especially for the early Middle Ages. Then there is also the account by Wulfstan, who explored the world of the Baltic Sea up to Estland and reported, for instance, “This Estland is very large and has many fortified settlements, and in each of these there is a king. There is a great deal of money and fishing. The king and the most powerful men drink mare’s milk, the poor men and the slaves drink mead. There is much strife among them” (23).

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<sup>9</sup> *Two Voyagers at the Court of King Alfred: The Ventures of Ohthere and Wulfstan together with the Description of Northern Europe from the Old English Orosius*, ed. Niels Lund, trans. Christine E. Fell (York: William Sessions, 1984), 17. See also <https://lrc.la.utexas.edu/eieol/engol/40> (last accessed on May 8, 2017). *Ohthere’s Voyages: A Late 9th-Century Account of Voyages Along the Coasts of Norway and Denmark and Its Cultural Context*, ed. Janet Bately and Anton Englert. Maritime Culture of the North, 1 (Roskilde, Denmark: Viking Ship Museum, 2007).

We could also refer to the Old English heroic poem, *Beowulf* (eighth century or earlier), where the protagonist arrives from modern-day Sweden and comes to the rescue of the people in modern-day Denmark. However, the geographic dimensions do not matter here at all.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the question arises what we really know about the medieval exploration of the world beyond Germany or England. This paper will make an effort to bring into play those travelogues or literary accounts in which northern Europe assumed greater importance, as it was explored and traversed by a host of local individuals, pursuing economic, military, or political goals. It does not matter for our purposes whether the travel accounts were fictional or factual; instead, the emphasis will rest on how the northern hemisphere came into focus and occupied the poets' and chroniclers' interests. How did Scandinavia and Finland figure in high and late medieval narratives? How important were those parts of Europe situated far in the north?

## The Rather Limited Continental Perspective

Courtly literature does not tell us much about the specific locations where the protagonists travel. Neither Chrétien de Troyes nor Wolfram von Eschenbach, neither Marie de France nor Konrad von Würzburg informs us in great detail about their heroes' itineraries. They simply roam the world, cross bodies of water, reach new kingdoms, disappear in some wilderness, and eventually return home, triumphant, or in utter defeat. The forest represents the common limit, sometimes a river, whereas big bodies of water hardly emerge. Boccaccio, however, has the Mediterranean clearly in mind when he composed his *Decameron* (ca. 1350), but Chaucer projects his knight as someone who had reached more distant lands. In the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400), we read the following description:

At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne.  
 Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne  
 Aboven alle nacions in Pruce.  
 In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,  
 No Cristenman so ofte of his degree.  
 In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be  
 Of Algezir and riden in Belmarye.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *The Beowulf Manuscript. Complete Texts and The Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. and trans. by R. D. Fulk. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*. Sec. ed. Ed. by Robert Boenig and Andrew Taylor (Peterborough, Ont., and Buffalo, New York: Broadview Press, 2012), "The General Prologue," 51–57.



A knight needs tournaments and battles to justify his existence, so it does not come as a surprise that this character had visited many different countries, both in northern and in Southern Europe, in modern-day Turkey and in Russia, in Spain and in Egypt.<sup>12</sup> However, it is still noteworthy that Chaucer included countries such as Prussia, Lithuania, and Russia, which added to the exotic nature of the knight's explorations and accomplishments far and wide.

His near-contemporary, the South-Tyrolean poet Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445), who proudly displayed his personal experiences gained on numerous travels abroad across Europe and beyond, also mentions parts of northern Europe.<sup>13</sup> In his famous autobiographical song Kl. 18, “Es fuegt sich, do ich was von zehen jaren alt” (It happened when I was Ten Years of age), Oswald outlines how much he roamed the entire known world, having spent time among Christians, Greek-Orthodox, and heathens (v. 4). He projects himself as a poor young man who had to work hard to survive, drawing on a treasury of traditional topoi. But he also includes a list of countries that he had actually visited:

Gen Preussen, Littwan, Tartarei, Türkei, über mer,  
gen Frankreich, Lampart, Ispanien, mit zwaian künigs her  
traib mich die minn auf meines aigen geldes wer (17–19).  
[Love drove me forward, relying on my own money, toward Prussia, Lithuania, Tartary,  
Turkey, and beyond the sea, toward France, Italy, Spain, together with two royal armies.]

He was obviously aware of the great significance to include the northern countries as well, whether he actually had spent time there on a crusade against Lithuanians and Prussians or not. A well-rounded knight had to have the credentials of having gained honor also in battles in the heathen lands north of Poland, at that time a particularly exotic territory. But Oswald does not go into any details and leaves us with nothing but impressionistic pieces, as if he had simply looked at a European map and had picked some countries to the north as well to expand his claim of being a universal traveler. Undoubtedly, here we are dealing with more or less reliable autobiographical references, and we can probably trust the poet that he had actually joined a crusading army fighting in

<sup>12</sup> Boenig and Taylor, Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* (see note 11), 47, n. 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, ed. Karl Kurt Klein. 4th, entirely new rev. ed. by Burghart Wachinger. Altdutsche Textbibliothek, 55 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015); for a good introduction, see the contributions to *Oswald von Wolkenstein: Leben – Werk – Rezeption*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Margarete Springeth (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

those northeastern countries.<sup>14</sup> Yet, there are no further comments or references to the world of Prussia and the Baltic countries, maybe because Oswald understood that his audience would not know enough about them and would hence not care particularly about further details. However, we also have to concede that lyric poets already in the Middle Ages mostly played with such autobiographical comments, and did not have any particular interest in providing geographically precise outlines.

Instead, as we also learn from Kl. 44, “Durch Barbarei, Arabia” (Through Barbarian Lands and Arabia), what mattered most was the list of languages that he could cite to associate himself with universal travel. Nevertheless, here Oswald incorporates more specifics than in Kl. 18:

Durch Reussen, Preussen, Eiffenlant,  
gen Litto, Lifen, übern strant,  
gen Tenmarkh, Sweden, in Prabant,  
durch Flandern, Frankreich, Engelant  
und Schottenland  
hab ich lang nicht gemessen (7–12).<sup>15</sup>

[For a long time I have not traversed  
Russia, Prussia, Estonia  
or passed through Lithuania, Livonia, and the Curland Spit  
toward Denmark, Sweden, and Brabant,  
through Flanders, France, and England,  
and Scotland.]

In the famous autobiographical and also mystical account by Margery Kempe (ca. 1434), we learn that this English woman, the daughter of the mayor of Lynn – today King’s Lynn – did not only travel most courageously to Rome, Jerusalem, and Santiago de Compostela, but late in her life also visited her daughter-in-law in modern day Danzig/Gdańsk. She took the sea route, meaning that she first reached southern Norway, where she spent Easter, and then continued

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<sup>14</sup> Dirk Joschko, *Oswald von Wolkenstein: Eine Monographie zu Person, Werk und Forschungsgeschichte*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 396 (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1985), 47–51; Bernd Müller, “Ich han gewandelt manig her/gen Preussen, Reussen, uber mer: Zur Problematik der Preussenfahrten bei Oswald von Wolkenstein,” *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 5 (1988–1989): 465–77; Ute Monika Schwob, “Zweifel am gerechten Glaubenskrieg? Oswald von Wolkenstein und seine adeligen Freunde als Preussenfahrer,” *Mittelalterliche Kultur und Literatur im Deutschordensstaat in Preussen: Leben und Nachleben*, ed. Jarosław Wenta, Sieglinde Hartmann, Gisela Vollmann-Profe, and Werner Paravicini (Toruń, Poland: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Naukowe Mikołaja Kopernika, 2008), 271–89.

<sup>15</sup> In a footnote to this song, Wachinger (see note 13) ‘translates’ Oswald’s references into the modern geographical terms: Prussia, Livonia, Estonia, Lithuania, and the Vistula Lagoon.

with her trip down to Germany, that is, into the Baltic Sea, until they reached her daughter-in-law's home-town. But Kempe does not inform us about Norway itself, and she does not comment on Denmark or Germany either since she is focused on her mystical guidance by God, her prayers, confessions, and absolutions by the various priests. We read, for instance, only that "a short time afterwards her ship was driven towards the Norwegian coast, and there they landed on Good Friday, and remained there Easter Eve, Easter Day and the Monday after Easter.... When they had received the sacrament on Easter Monday, as is written before, our Lord sent them a fair wind that brought them away from that country and blew them home to Germany as they desired."<sup>16</sup> There are, however, no concrete references to that Nordic country; instead, Kempe limits herself to indicating nothing but her travel route and to the fact that they celebrated Easter there.

The protagonist in the anonymous prose novel *Fortunatus* (1509) also explores Scandinavia, but the report of his travel is limited to a few names and the distances between major towns. After having visited Cracow in Poland, the travelogue takes us quickly to Copenhagen in Denmark, from there to Stockholm in Sweden, and finally to Bergen in Norway. Subsequently *Fortunatus* turns south and reaches first Prague in Bohemia, then he traverses Saxony and Franconia, finally arriving in Venice (463–64). Scandinavia hence existed for the author as an integral part of Europe, at least in the form of a mental map, which differentiated between the three major countries and listed significant cities there. However, the narrator never bothers to go into details, but this is the same wherever *Fortunatus* travels. We are not granted any more information about France, Spain, or Italy, for example, except that there more names of towns are listed.

Nevertheless, within the larger context it certainly deserves our attention that the Nordic countries are also included and treated as worthy goals for the traveler *Fortunatus*. He wants to cover all parts of the known world then, and uses his endless monetary resources for that purposes. But was there really travel from the continent to Scandinavia, as outlined here? Below, I will introduce one remarkable example for that.

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<sup>16</sup> *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B. A. Windeatt (London: Penguin, 1985), 274–75; on Kempe, see Albrecht Classen, *The Power of a Woman's Voice in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: New Approaches to German and European Women Writers and to Violence Against Women in Premodern Times*. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 271–308. See now the contribution to this volume by Lia Ross.

## Iceland in the *Nibelungenlied*

If we switch our perspective slightly and return to the high Middle Ages, we also discover a specific report about a travel from western Germany, Worms on the Rhine, down the river, across the northern Atlantic to Iceland in the anonymous *Nibelungenlied* from ca. 1200.<sup>17</sup> The Burgundian King Gunther wants to woo the Icelandic Queen Brunhild, whose glorious beauty and yet also physical power make her both highly attractive and yet also dangerous. But Gunther is undaunted, although Siegfried warns him against this plan since he would not be a match for her (stanza 328). However, Hagen then intervenes and urges his king on, commenting that he should take Siegfried with him as his helper in this bridal quest: “sît im daz ist sô kündec, wî ez um Brünhildle stât” (stanza 329, 4; since he knows so well all about Brünhild). Gunther subsequently offers Siegfried his sister Kriemhild’s hand in return for the assistance, which concludes the negotiation; soon enough thereafter we see the company of men on their way to Iceland, which they almost miraculously reach after twelve days. The poet had obviously no clear understanding of the geography of the north Atlantic. As the narrator comments, only Siegfried is familiar with Iceland (stanza 380, 4), while the other warriors are stunned at the sight of the many castles and fortifications in that Nordic country (stanza 381). However, apart from the crowd of ladies standing high up in the castle windows gazing down toward the new arrivers, and the subsequent competition between Brünhild and Gunther, secretly assisted by Siegfried, we do not learn anything specific about Iceland. The new guests are required to put down their arms and armor, which is, according to Siegfried, the local custom (stanza 405), even though Hagen has serious doubts about this rule and feels deeply frightened.

The narrator projects Iceland simply as another kingdom as all others known to him. The geographic distance matters little, especially considering that Brünhild owns a suit of armor that was imported from Lybia (stanza 427). Moreover, Iceland seems to be fairly large as a country, since it takes days for all of Brünhild’s relatives and friends to arrive at her court of Isenstein after she had been defeated in the competition by Gunther (stanza 475). When Siegfried realizes the danger for them all, since Brünhild might not peacefully go with them to Worms and abandon her personal power, he secretly travels to the land of the dwarfs to solicit the help from the Nibelungs. He has to cover more than a hundred miles, but because of his great strength he reaches the island already

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<sup>17</sup> *Das Nibelungenlied: Mittelhochdeutsch / Neuhochdeutsch*. Nach der Handschrift B herausgegeben von Ursula Schäfer. Ins Neuhochdeutsche übersetzt und kommentiert von Siegfried Grosse (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., [2010]).

after a day and a night (stanza 482). This implies that Iceland was located not too far away from the European continent, especially since Siegfried had reached that island, or dwarf kingdom, already before in his youth (stanza 86) and had gained supreme power there. Iceland, however, does not gain much more profile, and in the subsequent events, with the Burgundians returning home with their ‘prey’ Brünhild, that Nordic country actually disappears into the fog of history and is never mentioned again.<sup>18</sup>

The poet also mentions an outstanding hero from Denmark, Iring, who, together with his lord Hawart, stays at the court of the Hunnish King Etzel/Attila (stanza 1342) and will later die in the final battle. In the anonymous *Kudrun* we learn of another Danish warrior, Horunt, who is related to the old and gruesome Wate (stanzas 204–06), while the lord of Frisia, Hetele of Hegelingen, commands over eighty castles (stanza 207–08).<sup>19</sup> Finally, the thirteenth-century didactic poet Rumelant composed four angry stanzas about the Danes when they had killed their king Erich V Klipping (ruled since 1259) in 1286, but otherwise, there is very little information about the Scandinavian countries in medieval German literature; hence, even less data about travels between the Continent and Denmark, Sweden, or Norway.<sup>20</sup> This perception, however, deserves to be corrected, as I will outline below.

## Northern Europe in the Middle Ages: Saga Literature

Did the northern world of Europe hence not attract further attention? Why would anyone have traveled there in the first place? What could have made Scandinavia or Finland/Lapland into a place worthy of being visited by continental individuals, if that ever happened? The far north was not characterized by any significant pilgrimage sites or by larger urban centers. Economic interests concerned only some natural products, such as walrus ivory, dried fish, honey, amber, furs,

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<sup>18</sup> There has been very little research on the role of Iceland in the *Nibelungenlied*; see, for instance, Francis P. Magoun, Jr., “The Iceland Voyage in the *Nibelungenlied*,” *Modern Language Review* 39 (1945): 38–42.

<sup>19</sup> *Kudrun*. Nach der Ausgabe von Karl Bartsch herausgegeben von Karl Stackmann. Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 115 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000).

<sup>20</sup> For just some fleeting references, listed here, see Carl Roos, “Die nordische Literaturen in ihrer Bedeutung für die Deutschen,” *Deutsche Philologie im Aufriss*. 2nd rev. ed., ed. Wolfgang Stammer. Vol. III (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1962), 374–406; here 374. His focus rests on the role of Scandinavian literature on German literature since the eighteenth century.

wax, etc. And the Nordic climate repelled many potential travelers already in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, as I will demonstrate subsequently, travel took place in northern Europe as well, but often for quite different reasons. The Nordic space was not unpopulated, and we can read much about internal travels along the Norwegian and Danish coastlines, across the land, and then to Iceland and finally to Greenland, not to forget Vinland, i.e., North America.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from chronicle accounts and other historiographical narratives,<sup>22</sup> we can rely especially on the Icelandic Saga literature, which was primarily oriented toward Norway, Sweden, the Baltic region, and even Russia to some extent, wherever the Vikings made their way and either looted or burned down the local buildings and settlements. However, the main purpose will be at the end to introduce and discuss a badly ignored fifteenth-century German poet, Michel Beheim and one of his important travel poems that deals with his journey to Norway. This will allow us to shed light on heretofore mostly ignored geographic connections between the lands on the European continent and Scandinavia already in the Middle Ages.

My two witnesses here will be the *Egil's Saga* and the *Njáls Saga*, both composed in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, but originally created orally in the tenth and eleventh centuries. In these sagas we encounter numerous accounts about the relationship between individual heroes and their kings, about conflicts between families, war, revenge, and escape, exile and settlement. The arrival of Christianity in the Norse countries and its conflicts with the indigenous pagan religion also mattered significantly in these texts. As to travel and space in saga literature, Judith Jesch has already remarked,

The theme of travel both near and far resonated throughout Old Icelandic literature, from the practical opening stanzas of *Hávamál* to the fantastical voyages of romances such as

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**21** Kirsten A Seaver, *The Frozen Echo: Greenland and the Exploration of North America, ca. A.D. 1000–1500* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Niels Vinding, *The Viking Discovery of America, 985 to 1008: The Greenland Norse and their Voyages to Newfoundland*, trans. Birgitte Moyer-Vinding. Scandinavian Studies, 13 (1998; Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006); Kirsten A. Seaver, *The Last Vikings: The Epic Story of the Great Norse Voyages* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010); Graeme Davis, *Vikings in America* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011); Jörg-Peter Findeisen, *Vinland: die Entdeckungsfahrten der Wikinger von Island nach Grönland und Amerika; Erik der Rote, Bjarni Herjulfsson, Leif Eriksson und Thorfinn Karlsefni* (Kiel: Ludwig, 2011).

**22** Roland Scheel, *Lateineuropa und der Norden: die Geschichtsschreibung des 12. Jahrhunderts in Dänemark, Island und Norwegen*. Frankfurter kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge, 6 (Berlin: trafo, 2012). The study by Paul Lehmann, *Skandinaviens Anteil an der lateinischen Literatur und Wissenschaft des Mittelalters*. Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Abteilung, 91 (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1936–1937), still deserves our attention today.

*Yngvars saga*. The Viking voyages of war, trade, discovery and settlement extended the world known to the Scandinavians, and many medieval Icelandic texts grew out of the desire to capture this world for posterity in literary form.<sup>23</sup>

In other words, here we identify the world of the Vikings, who were, virtually by default, constantly on the move, at least at certain times during the year, and represented a severe threat to the European continent in the north, the west, but also the south. In light of our current interest in spatiality in the Middle Ages, the evidence from the Saga literature deserves to be studied very closely, especially because it defies many traditional notions of the pre-modern world being in stasis and suffering from extreme stability. While courtly romances might not be specifically characterized by movement through space and an accurate awareness of time,<sup>24</sup> irrespective of the knightly protagonist's roaming of the land, Old Norse sagas pursue a very different approach and underscore the true extent to which travel throughout time and space was a commonplace already in that early period.<sup>25</sup>

We find a most impressive and intriguing example in the *Egil's Saga*,<sup>26</sup> where we learn of King Harald's dictatorial policies, which force many people to flee their home:

Many people fled the country to escape this tyranny and settled various uninhabited parts of many places, to the east in Jamtland and Halsingland, and to the west in the Hebrides, the shire of Dublin, Ireland, Normandy in France, Caithness in Scotland, the Orkney Isles and Shetland Isles, and the Faroe Islands. And at this time, Iceland was discovered.<sup>27</sup>

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**23** Judith Jesch, "Geography and Travel," *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk. Blackwell Companions to Literature and culture, 31 (2005; Malden, MA, Oxford, and Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 119–35; here 119.

**24** Uta Störmer-Caysa, *Grundstrukturen mittelalterlicher Erzählungen: Raum und Zeit im höfischen Roman*. de Gruyter Studienbuch (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).

**25** As to the concept of space in the pre-modern world, see the contributions to *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen, with the collaboration of Christopher R. Clason. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 9 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012). See also the contribution to this volume by Anne Scott.

**26** See now the contributions to *Egil, the Viking Poet: New Approaches to Egil's Saga*, ed. Laurence De Looze, Jón Karl Helgason, Russell Poole, and Torfi Tulinius. Toronto Old Norse and Icelandic Studies, 9 (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

**27** *Egil's Saga*, trans. by Bernard Scudder. Ed. with an intro. and notes by Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (London: Penguin, 1997), 7–8.

The narrator reveals an astoundingly broad geographic perspective extending from the northern Atlantic down to Ireland and Normandy. At the same time, the mention of Iceland in this context is of significance as well, though there are many more reports about the settlement of that huge island around 1000 C.E. in other contexts.

On the one hand the poet projects travel movements extending vast distances and big bodies of water; on the other the entire narrative is determined by individual travel from place to place, by royal messengers, farmers, farmhands, and merchants. The various protagonists talk to each other and then depart to visit someone else in order to negotiate a business, to settle political issues, to meet at the large assembly, the Thing, to strike alliances, to arrange marriages, etc.

In strong contrast to the European perspective regarding the terrible threat by the Vikings, here we are commonly told that some heroes went on adventures and came home with large hoards, such as:

Kveldulf's son Thorolf and Eyvind Lamb returned from their Viking expedition that autumn, and Thorolf went to stay with his father (9).

To demonstrate one's social standing and wealth, individuals invited all of their neighbors to festivities, which then turned into great political assemblies (10). Others control lands in "Finmark" where they collect tributes, which required extensive travels from Norway to Lapland, for instance (11). Most people traveled by ship and came from far away: "The same autumn, Kveldulf's son Thorolf and Eyvind Lamb, son of Kari from Berle, came to the king and were well received by him. They arrived with a good crew on a twenty-seater swift warship that they had used on Viking raids" (12). The king himself is constantly on the move and might almost represent a peripatetic kingship: "King Harold mounted a massive expedition, assembling a fleet of warships and gathering troops from all over the country" (14). The major protagonists are described both as mighty and impressive warriors and as farmers, which requires that they return home regularly and continue with the agricultural work (16). However, the winter months make it possible for them to resume their military and administrative tasks, which take them far afield across the entire Scandinavian world. Thorolf, for instance, embarks on a major journey to the Lappish regions where he is collecting the king's taxes and trades with the locals. The narrator is very specific about the full extent of his travel: he "travelled at large through the forests, and when he reached the mountains farther east he heard that the Kylfing people had been trading with the Lapps there, and plundered too" (18).

For the poet there are apparently no natural challenges, and the winter temperatures are never mentioned as if they did not matter. Much more important



prove to be the protagonist's triumphs and accomplishments, which he achieves on truly extensive travels throughout the Nordic world. However, even here, in the Saga context, there are no specific geographical boundaries, so when Thorolf later decides to travel south, he readies his "ocean-going ship" (27), orders his retainer Thorgils Boomer "to take the ship to England to buy cloth and other goods that he needed" (28).

All this takes place without any particular challenges, and we only learn: they "landed in England, where they did plenty of trading. After that they loaded the ship with wheat, honey, wine and cloth, and set off for Norway again in the autumn" (28). Of course, back home political problems arise, which drive the narrative in essential terms, but for us we can be content with the simple observation that these Vikings regarded the entire Atlantic and the Nordic countries as a space or territory that was easy to traverse and open for them when they needed new supplies or wanted to collect taxes.

Thorolf operates also as a typical Viking, reaching the coastlines of Denmark and the Baltic countries, "where he plundered during the summer without gaining much booty" (31). At a later moment, the account informs us about a similar raiding trip to the Baltic, this time by Bjorn and Thorolf, who return home in the autumn "with great wealth" (61). This Saga thus proves to be so invaluable, like many others, because it relates the history of Viking operations from their own perspective, mostly disregarding the victims.

We are also informed about the settlement of Iceland: "A few years previously Ingolf and Hjorleif had gone to settle in Iceland. Their voyage was much talked about and people said there was plenty of good land available (39). The narrative subsequently outlines in brief terms how this settlement took place, emphasizing how much it was necessary for the settlers to await better weather before they could find a convenient estuary, which made the landing possible, whereupon the new land was explored and taken possession of: "Haeng wintered on the west side of the Outer Ranga river, and when spring came he explored the land to the east, claiming the territory between the Thjorsa and Markarfljot rivers, from mountain to shore, and built a farmstead at Hof by East Range" (39).

Another example pertains to Skallagrim who "took the land from mountain to shore, all of the Myrar marshland out to Selalon (Eal lagoon) and the land up to the Borgarharaun lava field, and south to the Hafnarfjoll mountains, and all the land crossed by the rivers down to the sea" (49). Further south, the port of Dublin is also within easy reach, where Bjorn, Brynjolf's son, is allowed to do trading. Yet, the journey proves to be rough and challenging because of strong winds. While on their way to the Shetland Islands, their ship is damaged, which forces them to beach at Mousa, to unload their goods, and to repair the ship (57–58).

In the course of time the traffic between Norway and Iceland intensifies, as we are told in a fleeting comment (59), but the Vikings roamed all over northern Europe and proved to be highly mobile and effective in their looting operations: “Thorolf and Bjorn spent the winter with Brynjolf. They spent many summers on Viking raids, staying with Brynjolf for some winters and with Thorir for the others” (63). Eirik Blood-axe goes as far northeast as to Permia, or Great Perm,<sup>28</sup> where he has to fight many battles and also wins his future bride, Gunnhild, a woman with significant magical abilities (64).<sup>29</sup> Whereas in that chapter the focus briefly rests on the north-eastern part of Europe, the next one turns its attention to Iceland again, since Thorolf Skallagrimsson wants to visit his father there (64). Settlement, political and military maneuvers, and explorations, along with raids and looting expeditions, established international connections and made it possible for the various individuals dealt with here to traverse huge expanses of land and water depending on their plans. This also leads some figures in the saga to reflect on the philosophical meaning of traveling, as the saying mirrors: “the more journeys you make, the more directions they take” (65). Nevertheless, most of the Vikings introduced here continued to travel all the time, such as Thorol, who “set off that summer and had a smooth passage, making land at Hordaland and heading north to Sognefjord” (70).

The Saga material itself constantly proves to be predicated on movements since the individual protagonists visit each other, flee from persecution, go on raids, survey their lands, carry out merchant trips, voyage to Iceland to settle there, or explore new territories. We could hence identify this literary genre as deeply determined by travel. Time, space, and identity are intimately interlocking here, wherever we turn in the *Egil's Saga*. This entails not only activities within Norway or Iceland, but also travel and raiding to far-off places such as Courland, or Kurzeme, in modern-day Latvia (78–80), then Denmark (81–82) and Frisia (87–88). Later Thorol and Egil “sailed south past Saxony and Flanders” and reached England to offer their military service to King Athelstan (88–89). In this context we hear about Scotland, Northumbria, York, and other places (89–90). Of course, here we are confronted with discussions of warriors and their exploits both as Viking raiders and mercenaries far away from home, but all these comments alert us dramatically to the astounding range of operations carried out by the heroes in this and other Icelandic sagas. None of them ever faces difficulties in orienting themselves wherever they go, and it does not really matter whether

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<sup>28</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Perm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Perm) (last accessed on April 6, 2017).

<sup>29</sup> As Óskarsdóttir comments, “The area around the White Sea, prized for products including furs and walrus ivory. Effectively beyond the boundaries of the civilized world, it serves as an apt place of origin for Gunnhild” (208).

the actions take place in Norway or in the Baltic, in Iceland or on some of the island groups in the northern Atlantic.

Words spread far and wide, and people always find their way and quickly learn the latest news, wherever they move. The protagonist Egil, for instance, once “received word from Norway that Eirik Blood-axe had been killed on a Viking raid in Britain, Gunnhild and their sons had gone to Denmark and all the men who had accompanied them had left England. Arinbjorn had gone back to Norway” (145). Or: “Arinbjorn and Egil sailed their longships south along the coast, heading with their men for Saxony, where they stayed during the summer and won great wealth. When autumn arrived they went north on more raids, and moored their ships off Frisia” (149). Within a political context, we hear of a man who is serving as a messenger. He “brought the command from the king [and] was a widely travelled man. He had spent long periods in Denmark and Sweden and was familiar with the routes and knew all about the people there too. He had also been all over Norway” (152).

This does not mean, however, that the Norse people cared little about their own homelands and simply enjoyed traveling all the time. In the *Njáls Saga* (late thirteenth century), for instance, the hero Hrut from Iceland is staying for the winter with King Harald Grey-cloak, but when Spring has arrived, he becomes melancholy and turns silent because he would like to return home. When Gunnhild inquires what might bother him, he formulates the significant line: “it’s difficult to dwell in a distant land” (12).<sup>30</sup> At the same time, as we learn about Gunnar, traveling abroad is regarded as a matter of great value, granting the individual experience and wisdom, as Njál himself confirms (46). Gunnar then consults with a Norwegian, who confirms about himself that “he had been to all the lands which lie between Norway and Russia – ‘and I have even sailed to Permian’” (46). For Gunnar, this implies that he should go raiding, which he then carries out, together with his brother Kolskegg in the Baltic region. While the military confrontations and the heroic deeds matter the most for the narrator, we learn also that they went south to Denmark, to Smaland, then up to Estonia (Reval) (48). On their way back, they stop in Denmark and visit King Harold Gormsson, who would like Gunnar to stay with him. However, the latter prefers to “return to Iceland to see his kinsmen and friends” (51), which underscores his desire to reach his

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**30** *Njáls Saga*, trans. with intro. and notes by Robert Cook. World of the Sagas (London: Penguin, 1997). See also Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Njáls Saga: A Literary Masterpiece*. Edited and translated by Paul Schach. With an intro. by E. O. G. Turville-Petre (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press [1971]); Lars Lönnroth, *Njáls Saga: A Critical Introduction* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976); William Ian Miller, ‘Why is your axe bloody?’: *A Reading of Njáls Saga* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

homeland, as the king realizes as well: “‘Then you will never come back to us’” (51). Similarly, the people back in Iceland are overjoyed to welcome Gunnar on his return, which results in mutual happiness: “Gunnar and Kolskegg were cheerful towards their household, and they had not grown haughty” (51).

However, the focus in the *Njál's Saga* rests much more on the political events in Iceland where Njál proves his superior abilities as a judge and lawmaker. There are numerous movements as well, travels from the farmsteads to the Thing, for instance, from one farm to another, but those moves are primarily local and not the same wide-range travels as in *Egil's Saga*. In other words, Iceland as the staging ground matters primarily in this narrative, although there are plenty of references to global travels as well. Moreover, the poet projects clear images of the world of Iceland in its geo-physical form, especially focusing on rivers where battles take place (92–95) or that demarcate property rights.

The case of Kolskegg, Gunnar's famous brother, represents the major exception confirming the rule. He leaves Iceland at some point and turns to Norway. The following summer he goes to Denmark and serves the Danish king Svein Fork-beard, but feels frustrated and under-utilized there, although he is baptized. Subsequently he travels to Russia and spends one winter there. The narrator then follows his travels a little further, but soon lets him disappear in the dust of history. Nevertheless, it deserves mention that Kolskegg makes his way to Constantinople and provides his service as a mercenary there: “The last that was reported of him was that he married in Constantinople and became a leader in the Varangian guard and stayed there until his death” (133).<sup>31</sup>

From various narrative snippets we can gain here an impression of the wider geographic range which mattered for the author and which was constitutive for those Nordic people. We learn, for instance, from a man named Kari, who originates from the Hebrides (137). Another man, called Sigurd, is the earl ruling over Orkney (138). With his army, and this Kari, he is traveling to Scotland, where many men join his forces (139). Then there is a brief reference to King Gudrod of the Isle of Man (140), whom Sigurd and his men manage to defeat. At a later point we are informed about the arrival of Christianity in the North and in the Atlantic islands: “The Shetlands, Orkney, and the Faroe Island” (172), which underscores further the global perspective determining this heroic epic, or saga. Despite the focus on Iceland, at the end there are remarks about other global travels building bridges between Iceland and southern Europe, such as in the case of Flosi, who “still had

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<sup>31</sup> Hilda Roderick Ellis Davidson, *The Viking Road to Byzantium* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976); Raffaele D'Amato, *The Varangian Guard, 988–1453*. Men-at-Arms Series, 459 (Oxford: Osprey, 2010); Raffaele D' Amato, *Byzantine Imperial Guardsmen: 925 - 1025; the Tághmata and Imperial Guard* (Oxford: Osprey, 2012).

to make his pilgrimage to Rome” (301). Battles take place in many different parts, and all those actions contribute to the creation of a network of events all over the northern hemisphere, as we learn, later, once again of Orkney, the Hebrides, and Rome (307–08).<sup>32</sup>

Flosi’s pilgrimage is also detailed to some extent: “he sailed south across the Channel and then began his pilgrimage and walked south and did not stop until he came to Rome” (309). The narrator, however, does not linger much on the Holy City; instead he describes more extensively how Flosi returned “by the eastern route” (309), probably meaning through Bohemia, Poland, and Denmark, until he reached Norway and subsequently Iceland again. Kari, on the other hand, goes on his pilgrimage pursuing the western route, “and took over his ship in Normandy and sailed north across the Channel to Dover in England” (309). Subsequently, Kari went to Wales and traveled along the coast of Wales and the Scottish firths. Significantly, to round off this saga, the narrator finally reports that Kari and his men traversed the Atlantic late in the year and reached Iceland at the promontory Ingolfshofdi, but there they suffered from shipwreck: “their lives, however, were spared” (310). This then forced Kari to reach out to his nemesis, Flosi, who heartily welcomes him and offers his full hospitality, which thus concludes the saga. Quite significantly, Flosi’s end comes when he boards a ship, which people identify as insufficient for voyage. But Flosi is old, and he claims that he wants to go “abroad to find wood for building a house” (310). He still reaches Norway, but when he departs from there late in the next year, he disappears during his voyage, apparently having become a victim of yet another shipwreck in which he drowned.

These Icelanders operate much of their time while voyaging, and they live and die in that process. The *Njál’s Saga* is thus also decisively determined by extensive travels across the entire northern hemisphere, and finally adds comments about pilgrimages to Rome. Thus, North and South became connected, which forces us to reconsider the global relationship between the world of Scandinavia and the European continent, at least as reflected in this Old Norse literature.<sup>33</sup>

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32 Colin Simpson, *The Viking Circle: Denmark, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland* ([Sydney]: Angus and Robertson, 1966). For more global perspectives, see *Travels and Mobilities in the Middle Ages: From the Atlantic to the Black Sea*. International Medieval Research, 21 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

33 There is much research on the Viking world; see, for instance, R. I. Page, *Chronicles of the Vikings: Records, Memorials and Myths* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1995); *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano (New York and London: Garland, 1993). Noteworthy here would be, for example, Mikael Andersen, “Transport” (653–57); see also the contributions to *Viking and Norse in the North Atlantic: Selected Papers from the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Viking Congress, Tórshavn, 19 - 30 July 2001*, ed. Andras Mortensen. *Annales*

## A German Poet Travels to Norway: Michel Beheim

This now invites us to turn to the opposite perspective, considering how continental Europeans traveled to Scandinavia. We have seen above that there are only few scattered comments about the northern hemisphere in late medieval literature, especially because the normal focus rested on travel experiences in the eastern Mediterranean (Holy Land) or in northwestern Spain (pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela). By contrast, the various Saga authors outlined a dense picture of travels all over the northern hemisphere since the early Middle Ages, stretching from Denmark and the Baltic sea to England, Scotland, the Hebrides, then to Vinland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and then even to Lapland and Permian.

In the late Middle Ages the establishment of the Hanseatic League opened many new travel routes also to northern Europe.<sup>34</sup> This was also mirrored in a number of literary texts, one of which will occupy us here centrally. Michel Beheim (1416 or 1421–ca. 1475) was one of the great professional poets of his time, serving his lord Conrad of Weinsberg (d. 1448), then the Margrave of Brandenburg, King Christian I of Norway during his coronation in 1450 in Trondheim, Duke Albrecht III of Bavaria, King Ladislav of Bohemia, and also the Count Frederick of the Palatinate. Beheim composed more than 400 longer songs and three strophic rhyme chronicles, dealing, for instance, with the siege of the imperial palace of Vienna by the burghers (ca. 1462/1466), the siege of Trieste by the Venetians (1464/1466), the history of the Palatinate based on the prose chronicles by Andreas of Regensburg and Matthew of Kemnat (after 1471). Research has not paid much attention to him because the literary quality of his texts is mostly dismissed, although he offered numerous autobiographical comments and formulated many didactic instructions, thus serving as an important representative of his time. Beheim could draw on a wide variety of literary genres and employed many different melodies. His life ended most dramatically, since he was, while serving as mayor of Sülzbach near Weinsberg, murdered in 1474 or 1478.

William C. McDonald attests that Beheim “was a self-conscious artist, concerned with both form and content, whose work must be approached with an

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Societatis Scientiarum Færoensis / Supplementum, 44 (Tórshavn: Føroya Fróðskaparfelag, 2005); now see also Dayanna Knight, *Viking Nations: The Development of Medieval North Atlantic Identities* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Archaeology, 2016); Jean Renaud, *Vikings: des premiers raids à la création du duché de Normandie* (Rennes: Ouest-France, 2016); Rudolf Simek, *Die Wikinger*. 6th ed. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2016).

<sup>34</sup> See, for instance, Rolf Hammel-Kiesow and Matthias Puhle, *Die Hanse* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2009); Donald Harreld, *Companion to the Hanseatic League*. Brill's Companions to European History Series, 9 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015).

eye towards various levels of meaning.”<sup>35</sup> Those who have tried to dissect comprehensively where Beheim might have been inspired from, or what genres he utilized, or what themes he employed, could get easily overwhelmed. Beheim’s œuvre thus proves to be a treasure trove for many future researchers, but here I want to focus on only one song – here disregarding the complex issue of how to define the genre specifics that he might have used – in which he reflects on his journey to Norway. There are numerous examples in his work that can be called autobiographical,<sup>36</sup> and this song, “Von meiner mervart” (no. 327), underscores most dramatically how he presented himself to his audience.<sup>37</sup>

This poetic travelogue has already been discussed a number of times, so when Bettina Hatheyer highlights how much Beheim made serious attempts to convey to his audience an impression of the Scandinavian countries, which was both realistic and influenced by mythical concepts about the exotic world to the north. She praises him for his concrete descriptions and identifies him as a ‘serious’ “Reiseschriftsteller” (travelogue author).<sup>38</sup> I myself have examined the extent to which Beheim resorted to the topos of the ‘shipwreck’ in order to reflect upon his life-threatening experiences,<sup>39</sup> which he reflected also in his song “von sex mein grösten nöten” (no. 329; On My Six Most Pressing Worries).<sup>40</sup>

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35 William C. McDonald, “*Whose Bread I Eat*”: *The Song-Poetry of Michel Beheim*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 318 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1981), 20.

36 McDonald, “*Whose Bread I Eat*” (see note 35), 297–27; Albrecht Classen, *Autobiographische Lyrik des europäischen Spätmittelalters. Studien zu Hugo von Montfort, Oswald von Wolkenstein, Antonio Pucci, Charles d’Orléans, Thomas Hoccleve, Michel Beheim, Hans Rosenplüt und Alfonso Alvarez de Villasandino*. Amsterdamer Publikationen zur Sprache und Literatur, 91 (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Editions Rodopi, 1991), 347–424.

37 *Die Gedichte des Michel Beheim: Nach der Heidelberger Hs. cpg 334 unter Heranziehung der Heidelberger Hs. cpg 312 und der Münchener Hs. cgm 291 sowie sämtlicher Teilhandschriften*. Vol. II: *Gedichte Nr. 148–357*, ed. Hans Gille and Ingeborg Spriewald. Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters, LXIV (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970). Here I will cite only the verse number/s.

38 Bettina Hatheyer, “Bezüge zu den skandinavischen Ländern im Werk Michel Beheims,” *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 16 (2006–2007): 243–62; here 259.

39 Albrecht Classen, “Storms, Shipwrecks, and Life-Changing Experiences in Late Medieval German Literature: From Oswald von Wolkenstein to Emperor Maximilian,” *Oxford German Studies* 43.3 (2014): 212–28.

40 Cf. also Ulrich Müller, “Kontext-Informationen zum ‘Sitz im Leben’ in spätmittelalterlichen Lyrik-Handschriften: Mönch von Salzburg, Michel Beheim,” *Entstehung und Typen mittelalterlicher Liederhandschriften: Akten des Grazer Symposions, 13–17. Oktober 1999*, ed. Anton Schwob and András Vizkelety, together with Andrea Hofmeister-Winter. *Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik / Reihe A / Kongressberichte*, 52 (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2001), 187–206; Friederike Niemeyer, Ich, Michel Pehn: *Zum Kunst- und Rollenverständnis des meisterlichen Berufsdichters Michel Beheim*. Mikrokosmos. Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft und Bedeutungsforschung, 59 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2001).

As is commonly the case, Beheim concretely contextualizes his song, presenting us with much detailed information about the reasons and purposes of his journey, situating himself thereby within a broader political framework, beginning with him having suffered from personal persecutions in Rothenburg ob der Tauber as a servant of Margrave Albrecht Achilles of Brandenburg (1414–1486).<sup>41</sup> As is commonly the case, the poet projects himself in a very personal perspective, making sure that the audience knows exactly who is talking here: “ich, Michel Pehamer” (11; I, Michel Beheim), which might ultimately undermine the poetic quality, but intensifies the individual approach, shedding excellent light on how at least one individual from Germany mirrored his experiences on the journey to Norway.

The actual travel route and the travel conditions do not concern us here, as realistic as they prove to be. It only matters that he made his way from Franconia to Lübeck, where he boarded a ship to cross the “Osterse” (42; the Baltic Sea).<sup>42</sup> In Denmark, he learned that the king had departed for Norway to assume the throne there as well. This required Beheim to follow him, which thus opened the vista toward Sweden and Norway as well. Beheim was well received by the queen, as he reports himself (57ff.), since he operated as a high-ranking diplomat for his lord.

Next, Beheim took a ship to travel further north, which required to cross the “Westerner” (84), meaning the Skagerrak, where the strong storms caused him great fears:

mein augen waren schawen  
vil wilder abenteuer,  
Fraislich und ungeheuer.  
ich sach den wag her sausen,

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<sup>41</sup> Most recently, see Christian Heinemeyer, *Zwischen Reich und Region im Spätmittelalter: Governance und politische Netzwerke um Kaiser Friedrich III. und Kurfürst Albrecht Achilles von Brandenburg*. Historische Forschungen, 108 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2016). For a solid biographical outline of this margrave, along with a good bibliography, see also [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albrecht\\_Achilles](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albrecht_Achilles) (last accessed on April 9, 2017).

<sup>42</sup> Beheim research has predominantly focused on his religious and military songs, examined the musical component of his songs, and has taken into view how he commented on the cruel Count Dracul. See, for instance, William C. McDonald, “Michel Beheim’s Song-Poem on Dracula, some notes and a translation,” *Earthly and Spiritual Pleasures in Medieval Life, Literature, Art, and Music: In Memory of Ulrich Müller*, ed. Sibylle Jefferis. Vol. I. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 779 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2014), 187–229; id., “Armed Conflict as Deadly Sin: Michel Beheim’s Verses on Wrath (1457–ca. 1470),” *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature 800 - 1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 8 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 425–41.



dar inn die walvisch prausen  
vil grasser wann ain turn (87–92)

[my eyes witnessed  
many wild adventures,  
terrifying and dangerous.  
I saw the wave rushing up  
in which the wales float,  
which were bigger than a tower.]

Little wonder that Beheim laments about him having become seasick, but this did not prevent him from studying the ocean and all the unknown fish in there quite carefully (113–15). He also notices the presence of numerous corsair ships that could have threatened them, but because of their own strong defense, this did not happen (131–32).

Once the ship reached Norway, the poet voiced immediately his negative impression of that country: “Ich sah nie wunderlich / scheusslicher wilder lant” (135–36; I have never seen a more strange and disgusting wild country). His major observation focused on the lack of natural soil; instead he only noticed sand and then “von velsen, schrofen, schorren, / hach perg und tiefe tal” (139–40; rocks, cliffs, and peaks, high mountains and deep valleys), conveying, perhaps for the first time in medieval literature, an idea of the world of Norwegian fjords. Moreover, he found the presence of countless waterfalls quite amazing (141–43).

At the same time, he felt deep fear about the rough landscape, where people were forced to look up the steep rocks if they wanted to glimpse the sky (145–51). For Beheim, the presence of those steep fjords proved to be deeply troublesome, if not disturbing: “daz land ist ungeheure” (152; the country is uncanny). In deliberate disregard of the Alps, Beheim calls those mountainous elevations as scary and challenging: “mer wilder abenteuer / vint man in dem gepirg” (153–54; one finds even more amazing adventures in the mountains). Because of the rough terrain in Norway, people would have little chance to use horses for transportation or to walk on feet; instead, it would always be necessary to rely on the waterways cutting deep into the land (159–62). At the same time, Beheim notices the rich trading and bartering going on at the various market settings. Although being located so far north, the poet emphasizes that there virtually no limits of land: “kain man daz nie durch wandelt. / es hat so weiten kraiss” (167–68; no one has ever fully hiked since it is so vast). In fact, he assumes that there might be no end in sight if one were to travel further north. He also discovered the natural physical condition of the sun no longer setting even at night after the season of Pentecost (173–76). By contrast, during the winter season there would be very little daylight (177–80). Otherwise, the entire country appears to be covered by ice (182).

Subsequently, Beheim turns his attention to the natural resources and agriculture in Norway, noting that much gold and silver could be found, while foodstuff, such as bread and wine, would be sparse. By contrast, one could find much meat and fish, and then also lard and butter. Milk was the most common beverage (196).

Even though Christianity was the dominant religion, he also observed the presence of many heathens, especially Lapps, also known as Sami people, who were hunting animals in the forest and sold the furs to the foreign merchants by way of bartering (225–32). Beheim next reports about a legendary people, whom he calls “Schrellinge” and whom he describes as dwarfs who know how make ships out of leather and pit that allow them to travel under the water (253–56). Similarly, they would eat their meat and fish raw, and would drink blood (257–60), all markers of barbarianism and wildness, clearly the stuff of myths that had appealed to the poet who thus finds himself in a convenient position to excite his listeners with adventurous tales. After all, Beheim made his way only up to Trondheim in central Norway and not any farther (266–67), so he apparently relied entirely on oral reports about those mysterious people and could not rely on his own eyewitness experiences. But those comments were sufficient to frame the diplomatic account with both realistic and fantasy elements. Consequently, the focus returns to the political mission to establish contact with the Danish king and to relay to him news from his relatives in Franconia (285).

While the Nordic world in its natural manifestation and the accounts of the Lappish people tend to provide an affront for Beheim, as soon as he finds himself within the courtly context again he enjoys his experience in Norway and has only positive things to say about King Christian. Little wonder that he immediately returned to the rhetorical topos of the near shipwreck-experience when he went on his return-trip from Norway. Intensive and pious prayer by all the crew emerges once again, but finally the travelers are saved again and can continue with their journey and reach Denmark, from where Beheim could resume his land-travel. He quickly abandoned Norway and turned his attention back to courtly news pertinent to the royal house and what they mattered for his audience back in Germany. Even though there are clear echoes of descriptive accounts about the North in the works by Adam of Bremen, Piero Querino, and the Danish cartographer Claudius Clavus,<sup>43</sup> here we encounter rather personal reflections of an eyewitness who did not shy away from reporting in great detail what he experienced on his journey to Norway.

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<sup>43</sup> These parallels have been suggested already in the nineteenth century; see, for nstance, C. Molbech, “On Michael Beheim, og hans reise til Danmark og Norge,” *Historisk Tidsskrift* 6 (1845): 321–28; for further research, see McDonald, “*Whose Bread I Eat*” (see note 35), 122–23; note 16.

## Conclusion

A good number of late medieval chroniclers and annalists working for the Order of the Teutonic Knights, but also for the Hanseatic League and the Church, reflected on the history and natural and economic conditions of the Baltic countries, at times even Finland, and additionally also Scandinavia at large. The purposes were religious (missionizing), economic (trade), military (conquest), and political (colonization) – mostly in the eastern Baltic territories – in kind, while the relationships between the Holy Roman Empire and the kingdoms to the north were well established and functioned mostly well because of close dynastic connections. Naturally, the Viking authors of the numerous *Sagas* had much to say about their own world and the neighboring regions, but the situation for the continental authors was quite different in that regard.

After all, apart from pragmatic narratives, such as chronicles, the literary accounts are mostly silent concerning the countries to the north and the east of continental Europe, and we would have to wait until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to encounter more sources mirroring travels to Scandinavia.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, incorporating the evidence from the Saga literature, we gain a completely different impression since there we learn of extensive and intensive travels, covering the entire northern Hemisphere and reaching the British isles, Saxony, Frisia, France, and then also Italy, and at times Byzantium. The technical know-how by the sailors, that is, the Vikings, must have been tremendous, and so their ability to orient themselves in the vast swaths of the North Atlantic, without the help of a compass and even without the aid of an astrolabe.

The fleeting comments by Geoffrey Chaucer, Margery Kempe, and Oswald von Wolkenstein as to the Nordic and Baltic countries confirm the rule of a general disregard, but we can also consider their statements as reflections about standard travel routes, especially for knights. Diplomats such as Michel Beheim fairly easily made their way to Norway, although he bitterly complained about the hardship of the voyage and the existential fear for his life due to a potential shipwreck. Despite his heavy reliance on topical imagery, we can identify here a first serious attempt to portray some characteristic features of that Nordic country. In

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<sup>44</sup> See the contributions to the *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 16 (2006–2007). The focus rests primarily on chronicles and on the translation project involving continental texts as they were rendered into Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian. See now Elisabeth Wåghäll Nivre, “Northern Encounters: Michael Heberer, an Early Modern German Traveler to Sweden,” *Knowledge in Motion: Constructing Transcultural Experience in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods (1200–1750)*, ed. Gerhild Scholz Williams and Christian Schneider. Daphnis, 45.3–4 (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2017), 429–49.

terms of the experience of time and space, as captured by travel, Beheim made a significant contribution to travel literature in which Scandinavian countries come into view. In this regard, his song no. 327 constitutes a remarkable bridge to the Icelandic saga literature, despite the vast differences in genre, purpose, world view, and perception.

Quite naturally, for continental Europeans their focus of interest did not rest on the Nordic countries, but this does not mean at all that there was not travel going on connecting both parts of the continent. Centuries of Viking attacks on the northwestern coastlines and elsewhere had certainly a strong impact on the general attitude toward those Nordic countries, but by the late Middle Ages that memory was most likely gone or mattered very little. After all, the Scandinavian countries had also embraced Christianity and courtly culture. Nevertheless, while the local population many times went on extensive voyages, there was much less interest on the part of their southern neighbors in the north because the economic, political, and cultural centers were in England, France, Germany, and Italy, among other countries.

Romedio Schmitz-Esser

# The Buddha and the Medieval West: Changing Perspectives on Cultural Exchange between Asia and Europe in the Middle Ages

“There is a road to the West nobody takes.”<sup>1</sup> When reading this line written by a Buddhist monk of the Chan tradition from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, well-known to a Chinese audience, it becomes clear that categories of East and West matter not only from a European perspective. In fact, the discourse on the East, prevalent in the European tradition from medieval world maps to modern Orientalism and its recent critique,<sup>2</sup> is mirrored by a discourse on the West in Chinese and Japanese thought. In Shin Buddhism, the faithful hope for a rebirth in the pure land of Amithaba Buddha, situated in a somewhat mythical West. The Christian paradise is traditionally thought to lie in the East. It is situated in the real world (and thus depicted on the well-known Hereford and Ebstorf world maps), and at the same time it is a place not reachable by living travelers in this present life since God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

In light of such astonishing similarities, and feeling at unease to discuss medieval travel accounts of Asia once more as an early proof for European presence in the Far East (a kind of “globalization before globalization”), I started a project searching for influences of Asian cultures on medieval Europe. In the present study, I am trying to change the perspective, looking from East to West, metaphorically taking Stonehouse’s road to the West nobody takes. In particular, in this paper and in form of a first glimpse at my current work, I want to outline opportunities and difficulties of such an approach, highlighting some insights that might stem from such a fresh perspective.

The approach of turning perspectives, of looking from East to West, is not entirely new, though. The spread of Buddhism in the modern West has led to first surveys of previous encounters of Buddhist ideas and myths, touching on the

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1 *The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse*, trans. and comm. by Red Pine (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2014), 110–11 (poem 105).

2 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978; London: Penguin Books, 2003). Janet L. Abu-Laghod, *Before European Hegemony. The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Kim M. Phillips, *Before Orientalism. Asian People and Cultures in European Travel Writing, 1245–1510*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

medieval experience, too.<sup>3</sup> For antiquity, Peter Kingsley tried to reevaluate the origins of Western culture in hinting at the figure of Abaris, whose characteristics in Greek sources led him to the conclusion that this could have been a Mongol or Central Asian shaman visiting the Hellenistic world. Close friend to Pythagoras and remembered in Neoplatonic literature, according to Kingsley, Abaris provided the seed for the very development of Western culture. In this view, Central Asian Shamanism created the foundations for both Mongol and Tibetan Buddhism and Western European culture alike.<sup>4</sup> Less fervent and less narrative in my approach, I would like to focus on the sources in quite a different methodological way than Kingsley who tried to reevaluate the whole Shamanic tradition in an approach that may seem to some academics a little too esoteric. However, his basic idea of shifting perspectives is interesting, and I would like to make a similar change in dealing with medieval history. In an effort to turn toward a more global perspective, I follow a broader trend in recent Medieval Studies.<sup>5</sup>

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**3** Rick Fields, *How the Swans Came to the Lake. A Narrative History of Buddhism in America* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1992), 17–20, gives a good overview of the History of Buddhism in America and hints to the Middle Ages shortly. Stephen Batchelor, *The Awakening of the West. The Encounter of Buddhism and the West* (Williamsville, VT: Echo Point Books and Media, 2011), 79–100, stresses the encounter of William of Rubruck with Buddhists at the Khan's court. In his perspective, however, the limited impact of such medieval encounters can be summed up as follows: "With the exception of a few ancient Greeks, until the 13th century Europe had no knowledge of or interest in the cultures of Asia. From the 13th until the end of the 18th century its attitude was almost entirely one of self-righteous rejection, instances of Buddhism generally being condemned as heathen idolatry." Ibid, xii. An older overview by Henri de Lubac, *La rencontre du Bouddhisme et de l'Occident*. Théologie, 24 (Paris: Aubier, 1952), discusses medieval encounters of Europe with Buddhism, too, but remains traditional in its approach, consistently assuming that Christianity was simply superior to the Eastern religion he discusses.

**4** Peter Kingsley, *A Story Waiting to Pierce You: Mongolia, Tibet and the Destiny of the Western World* (Point Reyes, CA: Golden Sufi Center, 2014). I am thankful to Thomas Willard for this hint, one of the fruits of the lively discussions at the Tucson conference this paper is based on. A closeness of Buddhist ideas to the teaching of Pythagoras was noticed by Batchelor, *Awakening* (see note 3), 3.

**5** Cf., e.g., Hermann Kulke, *Das europäische Mittelalter – ein eurasiatisches Mittelalter?* Das mittelalterliche Jahrtausend, 3 (Berlin and Boston, MA: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), who approaches the discussion from the perspective of India and gives an extensive overview on studies on Eurasia in the medieval period; and the contributors to *Transkulturelle Verflechtungen im mittelalterlichen Jahrtausend. Europa, Ostasien, Afrika*, ed. Michael Borgolte and Matthias M. Tischler (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012); *Europa im Geflecht der Welt. Mittelalterliche Migrationen in globalen Bezügen*, ed. Michael Borgolte, Julia Dücker, Marcel Müllerburg, Paul Predatsch, and Bernd Schneidmüller. Europa im Mittelalter, 20 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012); *Histoire du monde au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Patrick Boucheron (Paris: Fayard, 2009). See also Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016).

As straightforward as such an approach might seem, it soon is troubled by the state of available sources. Coming mainly from the West or at least reflecting European positions, they make it difficult to ask directly about Asian influences. In homage to the place where this paper was first presented and discussed, I would like to highlight this problem with a close-by example, although it does not relate to Asia: How would you write a history of Tucson in Arizona? After some preliminary discussions of an all too often uncertain prehistory, a conservative approach could start with the missionary work of Jesuits. A person like Eusebio Kino (1645–1711) could be the hero of such a story. Born in Trent, today part of Italy but at his time the Italian-speaking region of Tyrol and being under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of Trent, he was educated in Austria and Southern Germany and subsequently played an important role in the missionary work in this remote part of the Spanish Empire.<sup>6</sup> The resulting story could retrace the history of impressive places like San Xavier del Bac, and the history of one of Tucson's heroes, today honored by a statue and a parkway named after him.

However, by choosing our entry point, we are also choosing which history we favor. The narrative of the historian is highly influenced by such a choice, as Johannes Fried already convincingly pointed out several years ago.<sup>7</sup> But how could we change our point of view? Visiting San Xavier del Bac, one encounters a statue of a female saint, the blessed (and only since recently, canonized) Kateri Tekakwitha (ca. 1656–1680), and there it is: The Native American perspective on history, with a female heroine as protagonist, a contemporary to Padre Kino. But

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6 Cf. Hubert Gundolf, *Der reitende Padre: Auf den Spuren des Welschtiroler Jesuitenmissionars Eusebio Kino in Amerika* (Innsbruck: Berenkamp, 2015); Albrecht Classen, *Early History of the Southwest Through the Eyes of German-Speaking Jesuit Missionaries. A Transcultural Experience in the Eighteenth Century* (Lanham, MD, Boulder, CO, et al.: Lexington Books, 2013), esp. 53–72; Bernd Hausberger, “Die universale Sendung des P. Eusebio Francisco Kino, S.J. (1645–1711),” *Globale Lebensläufe: Menschen als Akteure im weltgeschichtlichen Geschehen*, ed. Bernd Hausberger. Globalgeschichte und Entwicklungspolitik, 3 (Vienna: Mandelbaum-Verlag, 2006), 46–76; Albrecht Classen, “Padre Eusebio Kino – ein österreichisch-italienischer Missionar aus Tirol in Sonora/Mexiko und Arizona,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 105 (1997): 441–66; Bernd Hausberger, *Jesuiten aus Mitteleuropa im kolonialen Mexiko: eine Bio-Bibliographie* (Vienna and Munich: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1995); Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Rim of Christendom. A Biography of Eusebio Francisco Kino, Pacific Coast Pioneer* (1936; Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984).

7 Johannes Fried, “Wissenschaft und Phantasie. Das Beispiel der Geschichte,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 263 (1996): 291–316. Amongst other examples, Fried refers to the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima; by starting the story with President Truman's reassuring words about the hoped-for shortening of the war, and following the bomb itself on its plane, the story becomes a completely different account turning to someone describing the lively street scenes at Hiroshima in the morning of that day.

soon, disappointment sets in again: Narrating her story would lead us back to the European perspective in many ways. Kateri Tekakwitha is venerated in the Catholic tradition, her story transmitted like those of other saints, thus becoming part of the effort to construct a global network of followers of Catholicism with identification figures from all continents. Moreover, she has nothing to do with the history of Tucson, belonging to the Mohawk of the Great Lakes region, several thousand miles away from the Sonora desert of Arizona. In short: The perspective of the Native Americans in the Southwest – even before this was a part of the US – is difficult to narrate without using European sources and thought, and this makes it all the more challenging to do so. But how, then, about Asia in the Middle Ages?

At first glance, it might seem difficult to compare the case of Native American cultures in North America with their known absence of a written tradition<sup>8</sup> to Asia with its long tradition of the written word, probably the oldest in the world.<sup>9</sup> But there is a lack of interest in coming to and writing about Europe in the Middle Ages: Neither Chinese nor Indian, Central Asian or even Arab sources care for a deeper description of Latin Europe at the time. There are only a handful of exceptions to this rule of thumb.<sup>10</sup> One of the rare cases of an Arab account describing parts of Europe is preserved in the travelogue of Ibn Fadlan (fl. around 920) who visited the Eastern part of the continent during the tenth century, sent there as an envoy of the Abbasid court in Baghdad. His travelogue allows glimpses into cultural practices by the Viking Rus, otherwise unknown in written sources; his description of the funeral of one of their princes is particularly famous, and his acceptance of general differences in burial practices

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**8** This problem was prominently highlighted again by Neil MacGregor in the introduction to his *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (London: Viking, 2011). For many cultures, objects are the only way to tell their story. The cultures of the Moche in Peru or the Taino from Hispaniola are but two examples. There are, however, examples for proto-writing (e.g., the knotted strings of the Incas) and elaborate writing systems (Mayan glyphs) in the Americas.

**9** Although a little outdated, the issue on “Early Writing Systems,” ed. Joan Oates, of *World Archaeology* 17 (1986): 307–465, still gives a broad picture of this vivid discussion.

**10** Cf. Romedio Schmitz-Esser, “Travel and Exploration in the Middle Ages,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture. Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston, MA: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), vol. 1, 1680–704. R. Po-chia Hsia, “From Marco Polo to Matteo Ricci: Sino-Islamic Knowledge and the European Discovery of Cathay,” *Paradigm Shifts in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), underlines this statement by a look into the development of cartography: In late-medieval maps from the Islamic World, European countries and places are (roughly) represented, in Chinese maps of the Yuan and early Ming dynasties, although based on a knowledge of Muslim cartographers, Europe is but a marginal notice.



is somewhat astounding.<sup>11</sup> But, in general, an Islamic audience was more concerned with Asia than Europe. To cite but one famous fourteenth-century example: Although Ibn Battutah (1304–ca. 1368/77 C.E.) traveled nearly the then known whole world (or at least included a description of such travels in his extensive account), comprising the Islamic domain from Al-Andalus to India and Central Asia, he did not visit or describe Europe. When comparing Alexandria to other major cities, he only thinks of two ports in India and one in China, adding the Genovese trading post at Sudaq on the Crimea as a fourth.<sup>12</sup> He neither mentions Genoa itself nor Pisa or Venice as major sea ports, although he must have been aware that Venice was an important trading partner for Alexandrian merchants and that Pisa had major economic links with Northern Africa.<sup>13</sup> This may have had practical reasons, like the uncertainties of travel security for Muslims in the Christian kingdoms of Europe. This was in stark contrast to the situation in the Muslim world since the Pact of Umar granted a certain security for Christian travelers in Sunni territories,<sup>14</sup> and this difference might help to explain the lacuna.

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**11** *Ibn Fadlan's Journey to Russia. A Tenth-Century Traveler from Baghdad to the Volga River*, trans. by Richard N. Frye (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2005). Cf. Albrecht Classen, "Encounters Between East and West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age. Many Untold Stories About Connections and Contacts, Understanding and Misunderstandings. Also an Introduction," *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times. Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 14 (Berlin and Boston, MA: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 1–222; here 127. Ibn Fadlan tells of the cremation of the prince and adds the discussion that ensued with one of the Vikings standing next to him, ridiculing the undignified earth burial of Muslims, as he saw it. Ibn Fadlan did not omit this criticism of his religion, although he stresses in other parts the complete lack of laws and rituals regarding purity obviously so central for his Muslim identity. See now the contribution to this volume by Sally Abed, who focuses primarily on the clashing values concerning ablution and washing.

**12** *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*, ed. Tim Mackintosh-Smith (London: Picador, 2002), 6. In the following century, there is again a travel account to China by Giyas ad-Din Naqqas, but none to Christian Europe, as far as we can tell; Ghiyathuddin Naqqash, "Report to Mirza Baysunghur on the Timurid Legation to the Ming Court at Peking," *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art*, selected and trans. by Wheeler M. Tackston (Cambridge, MA: Aga Khan Program, 1989), 279–97.

**13** Well known, e.g., is the impact Pisan trade activities in Northern Africa had on European mathematics: Fibonacci's father worked in the colony of this Italian city in modern Bejaia in Algeria, opening to his son the world of Arab science. Cf. Keith Devlin, *Finding Fibonacci: The Quest to Rediscover the Forgotten Mathematical Genius Who Changed the World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

**14** Cf., e.g., Norman A. Stillman, "Dhimma," *Medieval Islamic Civilization. An Encyclopedia*, ed. Josef W. Meri (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), vol. 1, 205–07. I would like to thank Anil Paralkar for this valuable hint that to my knowledge has not yet been discussed in a comparative

Nevertheless, the sources seem to indicate that medieval Europe was not seen as a particularly rich place in an Islamic worldview, and it played even less of a role in Chinese and Indian geography. The exception to this rule are the Central Asian nomads, raiding and settling in Eastern Europe with a certain frequency during late antiquity and the medieval period. Huns, Avars, and Magyars provide some earlier examples; the Mongols followed during the thirteenth century. But one could ask why the Mongols, after their stunning victories in 1241 when they smashed a Christian army both at Liegnitz in Lower Silesia and at Muhi in Northeastern Hungary, leaving the Christian defenses in Poland, Silesia, and Hungary in shatters, simply returned to their homelands without even attempting another assault. This question is difficult to answer, and there has been some debate as to this point; one of the causes might have been that the Mongols retreated to elect a new Khan after Ögödei's death in December 1241.<sup>15</sup> However that may be, in the following years, an expedition would have been possible, but the Khans were content with sending some letters demanding ultimate surrender of the West, asking the pope to lead the kings of Europe to his court.<sup>16</sup> So, maybe the loot simply might not have paid off, and the Mongols rather focused on conquering rich territories in the Near East, in Southern China, and in India. In this view, Europe seems not to have been a particularly prosperous part of the medieval Eurasian world. And, to come back to the problem of sources, the Mongols did not have a long tradition of written texts, so we can do nothing but to speculate on their thoughts about the continent they decided to loot only once and to leave broadly to its own devices in the near future. To make matters worse for us, the continent was even less interesting for Chinese or Indian writers.

One of the few exceptions of a well-documented traveler from the East to Europe is the Nestorian monk Rabban Sauma (ca. 1230–1294), who visited the

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perspective. That Muslim travelers reflected upon travel security in different parts of the world is further highlighted by a comment of Ibn Battutah on China: "China is the safest and best country for the traveller. A man may travel for nine months alone with great wealth and have nothing to fear." *The Travels of Ibn Battutah* (see note 12), 264.

**15** An overview of this discussion is given by Greg S. Rogers, "An Examination of Historians' Explanations for the Mongol Withdrawal from East Central Europe," *East European Quarterly* 30.1 (1996): 3–26. For the Mongol campaign in general, cf. Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow: Longman, 2005).

**16** Cf. esp. Karl-Ernst Lupprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern im 13. Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1981), 182–89 (no. 32). Purev Erdenesukh, "Brief des Güyük Khan an Papst Innozenz IV., Mongolisches Großreich 1246," *Dschingis Khan und seine Erben: Das Weltreich der Mongolen*, ed. Jutta Frings (Munich: Hirmer, 2005), 221.

papal curia and the courts of the Kings of France and England in 1287/1288.<sup>17</sup> One of the main focuses of the account of his travels lies in the number of relics visited and shown to the venerable cleric from the East, and the discussions he had about his faith with the authorities of the Catholic Church. The old dispute of the Nestorian and the Orthodox Church, stemming back to a fifth-century disagreement on the nature of Christ, remained unresolved, giving Nestorians even less reason to undertake such a journey to the West. It does not come as a surprise, then, that it was specific political circumstances that brought both sides together at the end of the 1280s. The Muslim grip on Acre, the last outpost of the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, was tightening, and the ruler of the Mongol Il-khanate in Persia, Arghun (ca. 1258–1291), had sent Rabban Sauma to forge an alliance with the Europeans to attack the Muslims. Although most welcomed at the courts he visited, the alliance did not materialize, and Acre was lost in 1291, making further cooperation futile.<sup>18</sup> Again, the sources from the East on medieval Europe remain scarce.

This might surprise us in light of the mythological dimension of “the West” in Chinese thought that I already alluded to in the introduction to this paper. This would be an interesting point for further discussions since the West figures prominently not only in Shin Buddhism, but in Taoism, too (Laozi writes his book whilst on the way to the West).<sup>19</sup> Although a little later, one of the great Chinese romances addresses the “Journey to the West,” but its title aims at the Indian subcontinent, not Europe, as East Asia’s West.<sup>20</sup> If the German Sinologist Thomas Höllmann is right, in China, the people to the West were classified by their degree

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17 *The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China, or The History of the Life and Travels of Rabban Sawma, Envoy and Plenipotentiary of the Mongol Khans to the Kings of Europe, and Markos who as Mar Yahbh-Allaha III became Patriarch of the Nestorian Church in Asia*, trans. Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1928). Online at: <http://www.aina.org/books/mokk/mokk.htm#c45> (last accessed on Dec. 21, 2017). For a modern German translation, see *Die Mönche des Kublai Khan: Die Reise der Pilger Mar Yahballaha und Rabban Sauma nach Europa*, ed. Alexander Toepel (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008). Cf. Folker Reichert, “Fernhandel und Entdeckungen,” *WBG-Weltgeschichte. Eine globale Geschichte von den Anfängen bis ins 21. Jahrhundert*. Vol. 4: *Entdeckungen und neue Ordnungen 1200 bis 1800*, ed. Walter Demel (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010), 62–102; here 97.

18 Cf. Luppryan, *Beziehungen* (see note 16), 56–82; Felicitas Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden: Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert*. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters, 16 (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1994), 89–109; Jackson, *Mongols and the West* (see note 15), 165–95; Adam Knobler, *Mythology and Diplomacy in the Age of Exploration*. European Expansion and Indigenous Response, 23 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 9–29.

19 Lao-Tzu’s *Taoteching with Selected Commentaries from the Past 2,000 Years*, trans. Red Pine (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2009), cf. esp. xvii–xix of the Introduction.

20 *Die Reise in den Westen. Ein klassischer chinesischer Roman*, trans. and comm. by Eva Lüdi Kong (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2017).

of Chineseness, their Sinization, leaving little hope to find real civilization in the Far West.<sup>21</sup> This might be an explanation for the gap between the mythological role of this cardinal direction for cultures in Eastern Asia and the absence of real travel accounts on the Western end of Eurasia.

This lacuna becomes even more prominent when one regards the case of one of the most important witnesses of Asia originating from the European world: Marco Polo (1254–1324). The account of his voyage was among the most prominent texts that a late medieval audience could rely on to gain a picture of the far-away parts of this vast, not well-known continent. Its many versions, translations, and early modern prints testify to the huge interest in Asia. This becomes obvious when we look into the text itself: The figure of Marco Polo mainly appears in a first short part of the book, recounting the voyages of young Marco, his father and his uncle, to the Khan's court. The major part of the book is a description of the lands of the East, of their inhabitants and their customs, and of the glorious reign of Kublai Khan (1215–1294). In this, the cooperation between Marco Polo and Rustichello can be felt, who had written Arthurian romances before lending his talent as a scribe to this project, giving the Venetian merchant a voice. That this voice was not entirely truthfully Marco's himself becomes clear when looking at the language of the text widely thought to be the original version: Although there is a Venetian version of the account, the original of the “divisament dou monde” was not necessarily written in this dialect.<sup>22</sup> But whereas the many medieval versions of Marco Polo's text have led to vivid discussions about their development, interdependence, the reception of the text and its contents, a very different picture emerges when looking at Chinese sources. They seem not to mention the Polos at all, although Marco's account claims that he had a major position at the Yuan court. Some years ago, this allowed Frances Wood to ask the

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21 Thomas O. Höllmann, *Das alte China: Eine Kulturgeschichte* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2008), 73–75.

22 For an overview of the long discussion cf., e.g., Christine Gadrat-Ouerfelli, *Lire Marco Polo au Moyen Âge. Traduction, diffusion et réception du Devisement du monde*. *Terrarum Orbis*, 12 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015); Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso, *Scritture di viaggio. Relazioni di viaggiatori e altre testimonianze letterarie e documentarie* (Rome: Aracne, 2011), 27–82, 109–142; Alvaro Barbieri, *Dal viaggio al libro. Studi sul Milione*, ed. Anna Maria Babbi (Verona: Fiorini, 2004), 129–54; Cesare Segre, “Chi ha scritto il Milione di Marco Polo?,” *I viaggi del Milione. Itinerari testuali, vettori di trasmissione e metamorfosi del Devisement du monde di Marco Polo e Rustichello da Pisa nella pluralità degli attestazioni. Convegno internazionale, Venezia, 6–8 ottobre 2005*, ed. Silvia Conte (Rome: Tielle Media, 2008), 5–16; Marina Münkler, *Marco Polo: Leben und Legende* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2015), 51–61; eadem, *Erfahrung des Fremden: Die Beschreibung Ostasiens in den Augenzeugenberichten des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), 102–13.

principal question: Had Marco Polo ever been to China?<sup>23</sup> Her book stirred up further discussion, and although it seems by now obvious that Marco Polo had indeed traveled to China, and some administrative Chinese sources might corroborate his story, their interest in Marco Polo remained pretty limited.<sup>24</sup> Again, a certain lack of interest in European affairs seems to be obvious in this case. Until new findings in Chinese sources broaden our perspective, it suggests itself that Europe was perceived as a periphery, and the European presence enhanced by the Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty did not attract major attention among Chinese writers.

Another typical question of research on the contact between Europe and Asia during the Middle Ages concerns the cultural experience of European travelers visiting the Far East. Another author like Marco Polo, the Franciscan Friar Odorico da Pordenone (d. 1331), is a good example. He traveled to India and China during the early fourteenth century, and his travel account was widely read and almost as popular as Marco Polo's.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Odorico's text became one of the major sources for the unknown author of John Mandeville's *Travels*, a fourteenth-century compilation narrating a fictive travel to Asia, which was widely read, too.<sup>26</sup> Researchers have noticed Odorico's love for accurate detail. Good examples for this are his descriptions on how the Chinese fish with the help of cormorants, or that their women are binding their feet. His account relates the following:

“Qui, michi volens complacere, dixit: ‘Si tu vis videre piscari, veni mecum.’ Et sic me duxit super istum pontem, in quo dum essem aspexi et vidi in Illis suis barcis mergos super perticas alligatos; quos postea homo ille uno filo ligavit ad gulam, ne illi pisces capientes illos comedere possent. Unde in una barca posuit tres magnas cistas: unam ab uno capite

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**23** Frances Wood, *Did Marco Polo go to China?* (London: Westview Press, 1996). See now the contributions to *Marco Polo and the Encounter of East and West*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Amilcare Iannucci (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

**24** Hans Ulrich Vogel, *Marco Polo Was in China. New Evidence from Currencies, Salts and Revenues* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013). Cf., too, Barbieri, *Dal viaggio* (see note 22), 9–43, and Münkler, *Marco Polo* (see note 22), 11–14.

**25** Cf. Folker Reichert, *Asien und Europa im Mittelalter: Studien zur Geschichte des Reisens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 235–39, and the introduction to the edition by Annalia Marchisio, in: Odorico da Pordenone, *Relatio de mirabilibus orientalium Tatarorum*, ed. Annalia Marchisio (Florence: Sismel, 2016), 1–115.

**26** *Die Reise des seligen Odorich von Pordenone nach Indien und China (1314/18–1330)*, trans. Folker Reichert (Heidelberg: Manutius Verlag, 1987), 15–16; Wood, *Marco Polo* (see note 23), 141–42; Helga Neumann, “‘Ein gar wunderlich dinkch vnd vngelawblichß, vnd ist doch war’: das Schreckliche Tal in Reiseberichten des späten Mittelalters.” *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* N.F. V.1 (1996): 35–46; here 41–42.

navis, aliam ab alio, ertiam verio in medio. Dum autem hoc sic fecisset, dissoluit illos mergos, qui se postea in aquam submergebant; et sic pisces quam plurimos capiebant, quos ipsimet postea in illis cistis ponebant, ita quod in parva hora omnes ille ciste fuerunt plene.”<sup>27</sup>

[The host wanted to do me good and said: “Would you like to see how to catch fish efficiently? Come with me and see!” He guided me to a bridge, and there I spotted boats with some diving birds bound to a stick. The man took a string around their neck, so that once in the water they were unable to devour the fish. Then he placed three baskets in the ship, one at the end of the boat, one at the other end, the third in the middle. Then he let loose the birds which started to dive into the water and caught as many fish as possible. He laid them in the baskets mentioned above. Within a short while, they were full with the catch.]

In another instance, he remarks matter-of-factly:

“Pulchritudo autem mulierum est parvos habere pedes; unde hanc consuetudinem habent matres illarum mulierum: nam quando nascuntur eis alique puelle, ligant eis pedes, quos numquam dimittunt eis crescere.”<sup>28</sup>

[The beauty of women rests with their small feet. That is why mothers bind the feet of their new-born daughters, so that they do not grow anymore.]

In both instances, Odorico is the first European to account for such practices.<sup>29</sup>

Such an interest in the cultural travel experience of medieval Europeans is comparatively new in research. Still older is the interest in the first European Christians starting the evangelization of East Asia. In a teleological perspective, medieval history could be used to justify similar endeavors intensified since the nineteenth century and being undertaken to this day. In general, we know that the first Catholics in the Far East were the Franciscan missionaries like the aforementioned Odorico da Pordenone and his contemporary Giovanni da Montecorvino (1247–1328). Giovanni became the founder of the bishopric of Beijing and thus established the first Catholic structure of dioceses in China, providing a backbone for any further missionary work.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Odorico da Pordenone, *Relatio* (see note 25), 184–85 (XXII).

<sup>28</sup> Odorico da Pordenone, *Relatio* (see note 25), 218 (XXXIV).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Alvise Andreose, *La strada, la Cina, il cielo. Studi sulla Relatio di Odorico da Pordenone e sulla sua fortuna romanza* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2012), 26–27; and Folker Reichert, *Erfahrung der Welt: Reisen und Kulturbegegnung im späten Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 199–200.

<sup>30</sup> Ian Gillman and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 300–02; Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*. Vol. 1: *Beginnings to 1500* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1992), 456–59; Alfons Jochum, *Beim Großkhan der Mongolen. Johannes von Montecorvino: Der erste Franziskaner in China* (Mödling: Verlag St. Gabriel, 1982).

In this context, the relatively tolerant stance of the Mongol Khans on religious matters has been of great interest to scholars. In his travel account, William of Rubruck (ca. 1220–ca. 1293), who visited the court of Möngke Khan (1209–1259) at Karakorum in the mid-thirteenth century, added a detailed description of a religious ‘round table’ he was invited to. Muslims, Nestorians, Buddhists, and the Friar were allowed to discuss and defend their faith against each other. However, William was not impressed by the outcome, his victory hampered by issues of translation (probably both culturally and language-wise). He concludes:

Quod amplius vadat aliquis frater ad Tartaros, sicut ego ivi vel sicut vadunt Fratres Predicatores, non videtur michi expedire; sed si dominus Papa, qui est capud omnium christianorum, vellet mittere honorifice unum Episcopum, et respondere stulticiis eorum, (...) ille posset illis dicere quecumque vellet et eciam facere quod ipsi redigerent in scriptis. Audiunt enim quecumque nuncius vult dicere et semper querunt si vult dicere plura, sed oporteret quo haberet bonum interpretem, immo plures interpretes et copiosas expensas.<sup>31</sup>

[I think it is useless to send another friar to the Tartars who wants to go there like me and as some Dominicans did. But if the Pope, the head of all Christians, sends a bishop with all expenditure and honors to answer their follies, (...) he could tell them whatever he likes (...). But he needs to have one or more good translators in his company and he must dispose of a lot of money.]

So, how extensive was the religious tolerance at the Mongol court or in Yuan China? The answer is different to us than to the European friars of the era: Since all religions were thought to aid in stabilizing the rule of the Khan, Catholics were welcomed, but only in their minds was this a sign of special reverence to the Catholic religion, and it certainly did not exclude any of the other faiths practiced in the vast Mongol Empire.<sup>32</sup>

All these questions discussed so far have one trait in common: They are looking from West to East, in a metaphorical sense still following the Franciscan missionaries and Italian merchants on their voyage to the East. We are still thrilled by the exotic nature of their adventure, and it is all too obvious that the current hype of research in this field is related to the perception of an increasingly globalizing world. Medievalists want to play their part in this debate, and I frankly admit that I want to do that as well. But isn't there more to the story? Is

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31 Guillelmus de Rubruc, “Itinerarium,” *Sinica Franciscana*. Vol. 1: *Itinera et relationes fratrum minorum saeculi XIII et XIV*, ed. Anastasius van den Wyngaert (Florence: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1929), 145–332; here 331–32.

32 Cf., e.g., Schmieder, *Europa* (see note 18), 129–51, and Jackson, *Mongols and the West* (see note 15), 97–103.

there a possibility to shift perspectives, to look from East to West, given all the difficulties already pointed out? Let's try and go West!

In a very specific field of historic research, looking West was always fashionable: There is no doubt about the transfer of technology from Asia to Europe. To cite but the best-known examples, paper and gun powder came from China and numbers from India to Europe, conveyed by the Arab world and via Central Asia or the Indian Ocean to the West.<sup>33</sup> Yet, it seems that nearly no researcher has asked for more: Was there an import of ideas, of art, of material culture from Eastern and Southern Asia to medieval Europe? Again, this would historicize the Middle Ages, seeing medieval Europe just as one culture among many. And, maybe, this comes closer to the truth: who was in Eurasias's center, who was at the periphery? Medieval Europeans gave an astonishingly frank answer to this question: Asia was the world's prosperous center, and its spiritual one, too. Jerusalem was seen as the navel of the world, with Palestine as the place of Christ's life and passion.<sup>34</sup> In the T-O-maps of Hereford and Ebstorf, the Holy City is not only in the center of the depicted world, but India (a broad term comprising the Indian subcontinent as well as China and Eastern Asia) was the place of wealth. Here, the earthly paradise is located where the principal rivers of the world have their source.<sup>35</sup> Wondrous people like the cynocephaly do have their realm here, and it is the place where spices and silk come from.<sup>36</sup> In the Ebstorf world map,

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**33** Cf., e.g., Marcus Popplow, *Technik im Mittelalter* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2010), esp. 46–48; and Thomas Ertl, *Seide, Pfeffer und Kanonen: Globalisierung im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2008).

**34** Beat Wolf, *Jerusalem und Rom: Mitte, Nabel – Zentrum, Haupt. Die Metaphern 'Umbilicus mundi' und 'Caput mundi' in den Weltbildern der Antike und des Abendlands bis in die Zeit der Ebstorfer Weltkarte* (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2010).

**35** David Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi," *The History of Cartography*. Vol. 1: *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. John Brian Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 286–370; Evelyn Edson, *The World Map, 1300–1492. The Persistence of Tradition and Transformation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Folker Reichert, *Das Bild der Welt im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2013), 56–59. Nikolaus A. Egel, *Die Welt im Übergang: Der diskursive, subjektive und skeptische Charakter der Mappamondo des Fra Mauro*. Beiträge zur Philosophie, Neue Folge (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014), 226–79.

**36** John Block Friedmann, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Joaquín M. Córdoba Zoilo, "Die Anziehungskraft des Orients," *Legendäre Reisen im Mittelalter*, ed. Feliciano Novoa Portela and F. Javier Villalba Ruiz de Toledo (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2008), 77–99; Marina Münkler, "Experiencing Strangeness: Monstrous Peoples on the Edge of the Earth as Depicted on Medieval Mappae Mundi," *Travellers, Intellectuals, and the World Beyond Medieval Europe*, ed. James Muldoon. The Expansion of Latin Europe, 1000–1500, 10 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 331–58; Reichert, *Das Bild* (see note 35), 46–52; Egel, *Die Welt* (see note 35), 281–305.



the head of Christ is placed in the East, whereas Europe lies close to his feet. Ebstorf, the monastery the map probably was made for and where it was found in an attic in 1830, is placed at the lower left-hand bottom of the map.<sup>37</sup> The nuns who looked at this depiction of the world obviously saw themselves represented in the periphery of the world, and not in its best part, either.

This leads us back to the principal question of this article: If it was highly appreciated for its wealth and as a source of mythology, isn't it possible that the Middle Ages were open to influences from the economic and political centers in Asia, be it India or China? Answering this question could break up the predominant idea that the Middle Ages were "merely" the pre-history of modern Europe and a world widely dominated or at least influenced by European culture. The idea that cultures are homogeneous and easily distinguishable from each other has long been challenged, and thus it becomes more interesting to pose the question for Asian elements in medieval European material culture and thought. To say it right away, my approach does not imply to leave a Europe-centered perspective per se: as a medievalist, I can neither lightly transgress nor ignore my own disciplinary competences and limitations, and this is not my aim. Instead, I want to add another facet to the history of the European Middle Ages, and it might well be that it turns out that this is a minor aspect in our understanding of medieval society. However, in historic research, one should try to scrutinize the source material first, and then reevaluate the meaning of the findings. In the following section, I would like to sketch the basic outline of my book project under the title "The Buddha and the Medieval West," to highlight the possibilities to approach such a broader question in future research.

A history of Buddhism in medieval Europe – at first glance, this seems to be an almost impossible topic. There were no Buddhist monks in Europe, no Buddhist teachings available in form of books or sutras, and direct contact with cultures where Buddhism dominated was rather scarce. But, at a second glance, there are a lot of sources available for such a history. Of course, knowledge of Buddhism and influence of Buddhist philosophy were limited, but nevertheless there are a lot of traces that can be followed. Out of this, a fresh perspective on European history emerges, changing the direction of our gaze from East to West. There are four main groups of sources that one can exploit for such an undertaking: (1) One can look for Asians with a probable Buddhist background traveling to Europe. (2) Europeans

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37 *Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte*, ed. Hartmut Kugler, Sonja Glauch and Antje Willing. 2 vols. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007); Jürgen Wilke, *Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte*. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Historische Landesforschung der Universität Göttingen, 39. 2 vols. (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2001); Reichert, *Das Bild* (see note 35), 54.

who traveled to Central and East Asia and encountered Buddhism, reported back on their experiences with Buddhists and Buddhist thought. (3) One text in particular traveled to the West via a long and complicated process of translation: the story of the Buddha himself, which resulted in him becoming a saint of the Catholic Church. (4) The vivid material exchange with Asia resulted in Buddhist art and decoration being transferred into the West. In all of these categories of sources different methodological problems arise. Buddhist thought was distorted or reported in fragments, so that no comprehensive picture of this faith alien to European Christians could arise. However, in my opinion, this is not sufficient reason for omitting this part of history from our picture of medieval history. Being complicated as it may, the sources are there, and so a history of the Buddha and the West can be written.

(1) Asians traveling to the West: As already mentioned, there are not a lot of hints toward Asians undertaking the journey to the European world of the Middle Ages. But the Mongol expansion during the thirteenth century opened up direct links between the Mongols' courts and European kings and popes, with trade links well established from China to Northern Italy. Diplomatic missions were an important part of this exchange, although they were especially frequent in a narrow time frame, namely during the second half of the thirteenth century. To defend the kingdom of Jerusalem, kings in the Latin West showed interest in an alliance with the Mongols, and especially the Buddhist Il-Khans in Persia tried to unite forces for an attack against Mamluk Egypt. More than a dozen of such embassies are documented.<sup>38</sup> When investigating the sources for these embassies carefully, it becomes clear that not much is known about the origins or religion of their members. Were they Mongol, Uighur, Persian, or of any other denomination within the huge Mongol empire? In the prominent case of Rabban Sauma, we do know a little more, since not only was he an envoy sent from the Il-Khan court to the pope and the kings of France and England, but a detailed description of his travels has survived.<sup>39</sup> He was a Nestorian, and thus a suitable messenger between the worlds of Persia and Western Europe. Based on such accounts, one could argue that most envoys were Christians, either from the East, like Rabban Sauma, or simply merchants or friars from the West, entitled by the Il-Khan to act in his name.<sup>40</sup> Such people certainly were an important part of these missions, since they spoke Latin and thus were able to communicate with the recipients of the Khan's messages. Thus, it is not surprising that they were mentioned more prominently in the responses from the West to the Mongols, since, obviously,

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<sup>38</sup> Schmieder, *Europa* (see note 18), 328–35, provides an overview of diplomatic missions between the Persian Il-Khans and the West.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. n. 15. Reichert, *Asien* (see note 25), 482–89.

<sup>40</sup> This was claimed by Knobler, *Mythology* (see note 18), 15.

they did the main part of the talking. However, some sources give an idea of the composition of the rest of such Mongol parties, but sometimes they give names for their members. To cut a complicated story short, these cases point in another direction: Mongol embassies usually consisted of many people, comprising nobles from different backgrounds. Their Christian, Muslim and Central Asian names suggest that in the eyes of the Mongols the ideal embassy comprised Latin native speakers, often Dominican friars, Christian and Muslim subjects of the Khans, and Mongol nobles. Since these embassies visited the courts of the kings of France, Aragon, England, and the papal curia relatively frequently, staying for longer periods of time as honored guests at court, religious practices from Asia could have been witnessed by many in the West. Since the Il-Khans were Buddhist, it seems likely that this comprised corresponding rituals and practices. Moreover, diplomatic missions were not the only exchange of people we can grasp in the sources: After the battle of Ain Jalut in 1260, the Mamluks sent Mongol prisoners to celebrate their decisive victory to one of their allies against the Il-Khans, King Manfred of Sicily.<sup>41</sup> Thus, Mongols were present at the Sicilian Hohenstaufen court as well, and their captivity ensured that it was a long stay. Again, we do not have evidence for the intensity of exchange between these Mongols and their guards, but it is certain that the purpose of these special prisoners was that people could interact with them in public (otherwise, the present of the Mamluks would not have made much sense for publicizing their victory). This way of thinking about the exchange between East and West is frustrating, though, since Latin sources show a lack of interest in the foreigners and their beliefs, focusing on the possibility to proselytize not only them but the whole of the Mongols. Unsurprisingly, one of the major comments in the sources about their embassy to the council of Lyon in 1274 was that the Mongol envoys had been baptized at the council.<sup>42</sup> The Il-Khans, Buddhists themselves, played with these hopes of Evangelization and fueled them consciously, before they finally turned to Islam and reshuffled the options for alliances in the Near East, Central Asia, and Northern India. Unfortunately, this discourse encouraged a viewpoint looking East and stressing Christian attitudes in sources both from the Latin West

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<sup>41</sup> Jackson, *Mongols and the West* (see note 15), 186. Burkhard Rohberg, "Die Tartaren auf dem 2. Konzil von Lyon 1274," *Annuario Historiae Conciliorum* 5 (1973): 241–302; here 278–79.

<sup>42</sup> "Ex Chronica universali Turicensi saeculo XIII," *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi* 47, ed. Adolf Hofmeister (Hanover: Hahn, 1912), 89–115; here 115; "Annales breves Wormatienses," *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores*, 17, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz (Hanover: Hahn, 1861), 74–79; here 77; Rohberg, "Tartaren" (see note 41); Burkard Rohberg, *Das Zweite Konzil von Lyon 1274. Konziliengeschichte: Reihe A, Darstellungen* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, and Zürich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1990), 295.

and from Persia, leaving the question of contact with Asian religions in the West somewhat in the dark.

(2) Much more explicit are Europeans traveling to the East, reporting on Buddhism and Buddhist practices in their descriptions. Giovanni de Plano Carpini (ca. 1185–1252) and William of Rubruck both tell about their encounters with the religions of the East; William, above all, reports of a discussion he had with Buddhists at the Khan's court. However, it seems that William was not widely read in his own time, which limited the spread of this knowledge. Moreover, his description chooses words that did not allow for his Western readers to understand much of Buddhist ideas: He chose the wording used for the description of heresies, qualifying the Buddhists not as such, but as “idolaters,” and maligns their beliefs as being of Manichaean character, including the doctrine of rebirth.<sup>43</sup> In a nutshell, for a European audience of the thirteenth century, his description implied that those people from China (a child, probably a Lama, from Cathay is explicitly mentioned by William)<sup>44</sup> were Cathars.

Any connection to the figure of the Buddha is not stated, and different schools of Buddhism, or Daoist or Confucian ideas remain unexplained. However, the attentive reader of William knew from another passage in his book of some of the Buddhist practices; for example, William compares a mala to the rosary for his Catholic readership, getting this point mainly right.<sup>45</sup> The knowledge of rebirth as a major difference in the belief systems of East Asia in contrast to Europe was popularized by the account of Odorico da Pordenone, widely read and promoted in writing and book miniatures. In a monastery in Hangzhou, Odorico is shown the feeding of animals, believed to be the reborn souls of noblemen.<sup>46</sup>

Again, the name of the religion of these monks is not mentioned, but it is clear that they are organized in a monastery, and, in this episode, Odorico refrains from naming them “idolaters.” By the time Odorico's account was written down, the name of the founder of this religion had been known to the West, since Marco Polo had included it in his travel account. But he did not connect the different schools of Buddhism which he must have encountered in all parts of Central and East Asia to one single faith. Therefore, the story of the Buddha has again another geographic place: When recounting his knowledge of Sri Lanka, he mentions a monument to “Sergamoni Borchan” (Shakyamuni Buddha) and recounts

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<sup>43</sup> “Sunt enim omnes istius heresis manicheorum, quod medietas rerum sit mala et alia bona, et quod ad minus sunt duo principia; et de animabus sentiunt omnes quod transeant de corpore in corpus.” Guillelmus de Rubruc, “Itinerarium” (see note 31), 295.

<sup>44</sup> Guillelmus de Rubruc, “Itinerarium” (see note 31), 295.

<sup>45</sup> Guillelmus de Rubruc, “Itinerarium” (see note 31), 230.

<sup>46</sup> Odorico da Pordenone, *Relatio* (see note 25), 188–90 (XXIII).

the legend of the Buddha.<sup>47</sup> Marco Polo fails to connect this story to Chinese or Central Asian variants of Buddhism, and calls these Buddhists “idolaters.”<sup>48</sup> His problem to communicate outside of the Mongol court (i.e., with the Chinese) is well known, and together with the differences in Buddhist schools he encountered in Central Asia, China, and Sri Lanka, this may well explain the lacuna. However, it was consequential, as it made it impossible for a medieval audience to connect this figure from Sri Lanka with accounts of Chinese belief systems like those reported two generations later by Odorico da Pordenone.

(3) But there was another way the story of the Buddha found its way into the West. The *Legenda aurea*, the most important medieval book on saints’ lives, also contains the description of Barlaam and Josaphat.<sup>49</sup> This is a Christianized version of the story of the Buddha, which traveled from India via Georgia and the Byzantine Empire into the West. Older Latin versions led to the spread of this saintly life, which then was included by Iacopo da Varazze (Jacobus de Voragine) in his hagiographic collection.<sup>50</sup> Although late medieval Christians did not know it, they were venerating a saint who was an avatar of the Buddha. To make him into a Christian saint, the story was changed, especially regarding its ethical meaning. Aspects of *memento mori* common to both religions were adapted so that people would not place the focus on the fleeting moment of human existence, but on the meaninglessness of worldly pleasure in regard to the fate in the afterlife. Thus, the story was transplanted from a culture that cherished the idea of a cycle of rebirth into a culture where an individual, unrepeatable life was taken as fact. This influx of Buddhist ideas therefore was restricted to literary motives and the general framework of the story of the Buddha, but it removed the label of another religion from the package, applying

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47 Marco Polo, *Il Milione*, ed. Luigi Foscolo Benedetto (Florence: Leo S. Olschki editore, 1928), 193. Cf. Reichert, *Asien* (see note 25), 199–201; Reichert, *Erfahrung* (see note 29), 165.

48 Cf. Reichert, *Asien* (see note 25), 199–201.

49 Cf. Albrecht Classen, “Kulturelle und religiöse Kontakte zwischen dem christlichen Europa und dem buddhistischen Indien während des Mittelalters: Rudolfs von Ems Barlaam und Josaphat im europäischen Kontext.” *Fabula* 41 (2000): 203–28; Constanza Cordoni, “Barlaam und Josaphat in der europäischen Literatur des Mittelalters,” Ph.D. diss., Vienna, 2010. See also the contributions to *Barlaam und Josaphat: Neue Perspektiven auf ein europäisches Phänomen*, ed. Constanza Cordoni und Matthias Meyer (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015).

50 Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda aurea con le miniature dal codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (Florence and Milan: Sismel, 2007), vol. 2, 1390–1407 (“De sanctis Barlaam et Josaphat”). For an explanation of the variation of the name (Jacobus de Voragine in English and French, Iacopo da Varazze in Italian) and on this most important hagiographical work of the Middle Ages, see Jacques Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time: Jacobus de Voragine and The Golden Legend*, transl. by Lydia G. Cochrane (2011; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

differing ethical standards and general worldviews. Only thus was it possible to make Buddha a Catholic saint. As such, churches venerated relics of Josaphat, were named after this model saint,<sup>51</sup> and the story of Barlaam and Josaphat was depicted prominently, too.<sup>52</sup>

(4) A very similar kind of influx can be grasped in the realm of material culture. Buddhist symbols found their way into the West on goods coming from Asia. Since they were highly appreciated in their new surroundings, these symbols were too. A good example was scrutinized lately by Jaroslav Folda. He hints at the use of Çintamani silks, a favored fabric both in the Islamic world and the Latin West during the later Middle Ages and the early modern period. Repeating a pattern of three dots in the shape of a pyramid, these silks could be interpreted as a symbol of the trinity. Unsurprisingly, they are depicted in biblical scenes from medieval manuscript illuminations to Titian's "Entombment of Christ" (1526) in the Prado. At their place of origin, however, these fabrics depicted a well-known Buddhist symbol for the three jewels (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha).<sup>53</sup> Less ambiguous is the Buddha statue found close to Stockholm, known today as the Helgö Buddha. Made in the Swat Valley of Northern India during the sixth century, it was found in 1956 as part of a Viking hoard of the late eighth century. Did the Vikings who collected this item have any understanding of the object's religious meaning? At least, the statue points once more to the early medieval connections

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51 de Lubac, *La rencontre* (see note 3), 28–29, remarks that such relics were held by the Sint-Andrieskerk in Antwerp, and hints at a church in Palermo with this patron saint.

52 I am grateful to Albrecht Classen for discussing this form of reception of 'Buddhistic' thought in late medieval European art with me. According to Gertrud Blaschitz, this is the case in a city palace in Krems, Austria: Gertrud Blaschitz, "Farbiger Innenraum – genealogische Metapher? Barlaam- und Josaphat-Fresken in der Kremser 'Gozzoburg'," *Farbe im Mittelalter: Materialität – Medialität – Semantik*, ed. Ingrid Bannewitz and Andrea Schindler. Akten des 13. Symposiums des Mediävistenverbandes vom 1. bis 5. März 2009 in Bamberg (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011), 159–74; eadem, "'Barlaam und Josaphat' als Vorlage für Wandmalereien in der Gozzoburg von Krems," *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* 57 (2008): 28–48. There is, however, another interpretation of these frescoes, too, identifying the iconography with the story of the advent of Antichrist, see Christian Opitz, "Die Wandmalereien im Turmzimmer der Kremser Gozzoburg. Ein herrschaftliches Bildprogramm des späten 13. Jahrhunderts," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 62 (2008): 588–602. Andreas Zajic, *Kulturgeschichte der Überlieferung im Mittelalter. Quellen und Methoden zur Geschichte Mittel- und Südosteuropas*, ed. Elisabeth Gruber, Christina Lutter, Oliver Jens Schmitt (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2017), 294–300, has voiced rather skepticism about both theories. There are, however, other depictions of this legend, less debated so far, cf., e.g., the recent study by Gertrud Blaschitz, "'Barlaam und Josaphat' im moldawischen Kloster Neamt, Neamt, Rumänien," *Barlaam und Josaphat*, ed. Cordoni and Meyer (see note 49), 21–42.

53 Jaroslav Folda, "The Use of Çintamani as Ornament: A Case Study in the Afterlife of Forms," *Byzantine Images and their Afterlives. Essays in Honor of Annemarie Weyl Carr*, ed. Lynn Jones (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 183–204.

between Scandinavia and the Byzantine and the Arab World, well known from the scrutiny of other artefacts.

One of the major problems in the quest for material culture related to Buddhism rests with the definition of the subject. What exactly is Buddhist art? The relationship of religion, art, politics, and society in European and Asian cultures was (and still is) very different. For contemporary art, this question has already been posed,<sup>54</sup> but its discussion regarding the Middle Ages lies at the heart of this part of my project. Could one regard the traditional art of Chinese landscapes as being intrinsically Buddhist? Their play with the void is deeply rooted in Chan Buddhist and Taoist ideas. But did any medieval European have any possibility to talk to Chinese artisans, to work together with them, and exchange thoughts about art theory or iconography? There is a case proving that such a cooperation actually happened, leaving us with somewhat more than just mere speculation on coinciding possibilities. Two tombstones found in the 1950s in the Chinese city of Yangzhou show that such direct contacts existed. A Latin inscription dates these tombstones to 1342 and 1344, and they were made for the children of the Italian merchant Domenico de Vilioni. A Chinese inscription by an admirer on one of these tombstones and the artist's hand that clearly hints at a local workshop are indicators for an exchange of iconographic ideas. At least in this case, the merchant elite of Northern Italy and the Franciscan friars acting in the East had direct contact with Chinese artists, and they certainly brought their knowledge with them back to Italy.

## Conclusion

To sum up, there was some knowledge of Buddhist ideas and concepts in the West, but it was mainly indirect or only available in the form of its material expression, filtered by and for the Christian audience. The terminology of the European travelers reporting on Asia is clearly influenced by the war on heresies back home, and so it remains unclear what exactly terms like “idololatria” refer to: Indian Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Chinese Confucianism, Taoism, or Mongol Shamanism? But there are hints of direct knowledge in the sources. Although northern Italian merchants mainly remained quiet about their travels, material evidence like the Yangzhou tombstones and the account of Marco Polo who discussed matters of faith in front of Kublai Khan at the Yuan court suggest more intense exchanges.

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<sup>54</sup> *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, ed. Jacquelyn Baas and Mary Jane Jacob (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

Frequent visits (at least a dozen) of delegations from the Mongol courts during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries are documented in our sources. The travel accounts at least allowed a Western audience to get a glimpse of a world that was much bigger and not as uniform in regard to the practiced religion as it seemed before the Mongol expansion of the thirteenth century. So, could it be that the Latin West received influence from East Asia and transformed it into some kind of ethnographic knowledge about other religions, sparking interest in the diversity of religious thought? Or did such an exchange transform the European world in other sectors of society, in philosophy, religion, or art?

In the end, this approach opens up a road toward a contextualization of the European Middle Ages in regard to the history of Asia, giving them a place in global history but abandoning the idea of them being the measure for historic development as a whole. The concept of medieval history is tied to just one place in time and space, although this is a pretty broad one (a thousand years and all of Europe and a good chunk of the Mediterranean). However, the Middle Ages only became a major reference point as the prehistory for modernity due to European colonialism and predominance in the World. Leaving Eurocentrism behind is not easy (if at all possible, using the methods of a Western research tradition deeply rooted in theological debates of the Reformation, European Enlightenment, and nineteenth-century Medievalism), but to try to do this offers the opportunity to highlight hitherto unknown or overlooked aspects of the medieval past. If Europe was the periphery of the world during the thousand years between 500 and 1500 – and there are good arguments for that<sup>55</sup> – it seems highly unlikely that it was not aspiring to exchange not only goods, but thoughts with the booming regions of Asia, namely China and India.

A modern Europe without the influence of Arab learning is unthinkable, a fact well established in recent research. It seems to be about time to invest thought also into the possible connections and influences with other parts of the Oriental world as well. That this is not an easy task due to the indirectness of such influences seems to me less of an obstacle than an incentive to try harder and to dig deeper into the mutual medieval history of Eurasia.

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<sup>55</sup> Schmitz-Esser, “Travel” (see note 10), 1703–04. Romedio Schmitz-Esser, “The Orb of the World. European Expansion and Medieval Worldview,” *Ligabue Magazine* 66 (2015): 156–71.



Peter Stabel and Inneke Baatsen  
**At Home and on the Road**

Comparing Food Cultures in the Medieval Low Countries

**Food History: A Dynamic Field**

Food history has been at the forefront of developments in social and cultural history in the past decades. New research has explored aspects of material culture, of dining cultures and, of course, has further investigated diets and links between food and health, food and cultural identity, etc. As such, historiography has clearly steered away from the traditional structuralist approaches of the 1970s and 1980s of just identifying foodstuffs, counting calories, and linking these statistics to economic or demographic trends.<sup>1</sup> Scholarship started to pay attention more to the complex interactions of society, economy and culture. In particular, the social layering of attitudes toward and uses of food has come under close scrutiny with often very complex social and cultural assessments of standards of living and the place of food consumption in them and of the social identity of food consumption. Instead of the gross divide between the meat-eating feudal elites and the cereal-consuming lower classes, scholars now look at food through much more nuanced analytical frameworks and questionnaires.<sup>2</sup>

Food history has also become a study of the close interaction with changes in how taste and status are constructed. Taste can be defined as “how people thought about food – its ingredients, preparations and presentations.”<sup>3</sup> Taste as a cultural

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1 Fernand Braudel, “Alimentation et catégories de l’histoire,” *Annales E.S.C.* 16 (1961): 723–28; Craig Muldrew, *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness. Work and Material Culture in Agrarian England, 1550 – 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

2 Günter Wiegmann, *Alltags- und Festspeisen in Mitteleuropa: Innovationen, Strukturen und Regionen vom späten Mittelalter bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Marburg: Elwert, 1967). For the Low Countries, this has been nuanced by Tim Soens and Erik Thoen, “Vegetarians or Carnivores? Standards of Living and Diet in Late Medieval Flanders,” *Le interazioni fra economica e ambiente biologico nell’Europa preindustriale. Secc. XIII–XVIII – Economic and Biological Interactions in Pre-Industrial Europe from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi. Prato: Fondazione Istituto internazionale di storia economica “F. Datini” Pubblicazioni. Serie II, Atti delle “settimane di studio” e altri convegni, 41 (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2010), 495–527.

3 Paul Freedman, “Introduction. A New History of Cuisine,” *Food: the History of Taste*, ed. Paul Freedman (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 7–33; here 22.

construct of course changes through time. It was also constructed differently in various social and cultural frameworks, and it became an instrument for class distinction and even political hegemony, if not coercion. Through skillful variations of flavors, colors and displays of food, of culinary norms and social codes, of the material culture and social conventions regulating both cooking and dining, social distinction and social mechanisms of reproducing or questioning distinction, food and taste entered the debates of historians and art historians alike.

Food was like all aspects of behavior a negotiating tool of claiming difference or adhering to particular group cultures.<sup>4</sup> Hence, scholarship no longer focuses primarily on quantities of food consumed or on changing supply systems; there are rather new questions which now color historical debates, and questions such as how people dined, how they prepared food, how they perceived food as an instrument of identity and distinction, or how they defined food and consumption as cultural and even aesthetical categories assume a more central position within the scholarly discourse.<sup>5</sup> According to the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, daily attitudes and habits are defined by cultural codes, which are themselves a product of social position and identity. As eating, drinking, and food preparation are all very visible and tangible signs of cultural practice (and as such defining elements in the practices of cultural capital), the dealings of people with food become instrumental for determining social positions and vice versa. They become much more than just the access to food.<sup>6</sup>

Recently, Stephen Mennell has argued that a society's culinary culture reflects an almost Elias-like social "civilizing" process of trickling down of taste and behavior from dominant elitist society to other social layers, but also that it constitutes a set of values on taste which can be and are shared across different social groups, and therefore becomes an instrument of social dialogue.<sup>7</sup>

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4 Sierra Clark Burnett and Ray Krishnendu, "Sociology of Food," *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, ed. Jeffrey M. Pilcher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 117–34.

5 Freedman, "Introduction" (see note 3), 7–8; Jean-Louis Flandrin, "Internationalisme, nationalisme et régionalisme dans la cuisine des XIVe et XVe siècles: le témoignage des livres de cuisine," *Manger et Boire. Cuisine, manières de table, régimes alimentaires: actes du Colloque de Nice, 15–17 octobre 1982*, ed. Denis Menjot. Centre d'études médiévales de Nice, 2 (Nice: Publications de la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de Nice, 1984), 75–91; and id., *Tables d'hier, tables d'ailleurs: histoire et ethnologie du repas* (Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1999).

6 Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Editions de Minuit 1979).

7 Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food. Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996). See also Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*. Vol. 1: *The History of Manners*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (1939; Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

In some periods (of high agricultural prices and, therefore, in average lower living standards tensions about food and taste certainly increased. Recently, Ken Albala has described the sixteenth century as an era in which “despite the presence of an affluent, aspiring middle class, the disparity between rich and poor grew much greater, and as a consequence food became associated with class.”<sup>8</sup> Food became an “important status symbol in the accelerating process of social differentiation, especially in the towns.”<sup>9</sup> In that process, however, not only the food that was consumed mattered, but also the way in which food was consumed, motivating some scholars to point at a transition from a medieval culture of food inequality to an early-modern model of inequality of taste.

Scholars like Janet Abu-Lughod, Fernand Braudel, Sidney Mintz, and Kenneth Pomeranz have all highlighted the importance of changes in trade routes, fluctuating prices, and the rise of the “world economy” in introducing new foodstuffs and exchanging knowledge about food.<sup>10</sup> But with new foodstuffs and through cultural encounters also came new behaviors with and toward food. Eventually this would lead to, for example, New World foodstuff, drinks like coffee, chocolate, and tea, and later also food staples like the ubiquitous tomato, potato, and corn, starting their successful integration into European food culture in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet the required cultural preconditions for allowing these changes were firmly rooted in the previous centuries.<sup>11</sup>

## From Spices to Sugar, from Meat to Etiquette? Changing Food Cultures in the Late Medieval Low Countries

Scholars like Massimo Montanari, Paul Freedman, Jean-Louis Flandrin, and Vanina Leschziner have pointed at dramatic changes of the food norm, as they are defined

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<sup>8</sup> *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, ed. Ken Albala. *A Cultural History of Food*, Part 3 (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ulf Dirlmeier and Gerhard Fouquet, “Diet and Consumption,” *Germany. A New Social and Economic History*. Vol. 1: 1450–1630, ed. Robert W. Scribner (London: Arnold, 1996), 85–111; here 87.

<sup>10</sup> Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1986) and Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Berth Marie Forrest and April L. Nijaj, “Is Sipping Sin Breaking Fast? The Catholic Chocolate Controversy and the Changing World of Early Modern Spain,” *Food and Foodways* 15.1–2 (2007): 31–52; here 38.

in cookbooks, in discourse on manners, and in health manuals. This led to fundamental shifts whereby for example sweet flavors were slowly banned across the early modern period to the final part of the meal or whereby the dominant sweet-and-sour, tangy and piquant tastes of medieval cuisine were replaced by a taste palate with a clear distinction between either sweet or savory dishes in the early modern period.<sup>12</sup> The chronology of all these changes was, however, not fixed. There were a lot of regional traditions at stake, and particular shifts occurred earlier in some regions than in others. Describing the rise of French cuisine, Susan Pinkard sees the rejection of the medieval taste for spices and tangy sauces taking place only as late as the 1650s; and similarly, Barbara Ketcham Wheaton in her influential work *Savoring the Past* ensures us that “French sixteenth-century cooking was very conservative and in general continued the medieval tradition.”<sup>13</sup> Others, like one of the most influential specialists on medieval food, Bruno Laurioux, however, see fundamental shifts occurring much earlier and point at developments toward a more “natural” taste in Renaissance cuisine and even earlier.<sup>14</sup>

Research into one of the key regions of urbanization in Europe, the Low Countries, is still very limited. Despite the work by the prolific food historian Johanna Maria van Winter and economic historians like John Munro and Raymond Van Uytven, and some recent findings from archaeo-zoology and archaeo-botany, researchers have been very slow to pick up this debate.<sup>15</sup> Fortunately a recent

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**12** Vanina Leschziner, “Epistemic Foundations of Cuisine: A Socio-Cognitive Study of the Configuration of Cuisine in Historical Perspective,” *Theory and Society* 35.4 (2006): 421–43.

**13** Susan Pinkard, *A Revolution in Taste. The Rise of French Cuisine, 1650–1800* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Barbara Wheaton, *Savoring the Past: the French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 43. See also: Jean-Louis Flandrin, “Dietary Choices and Culinary Technique, 1500–1800,” *Food. A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. id. and Massimo Montanari (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 403–17.

**14** Bruno Laurioux, “Les livres de cuisine Italiens à la fin du XVe et au début du XVIe siècle, expressions d’un syncrétisme culinaire méditerranéen,” *Une histoire culinaire du Moyen Âge*, ed. Bruno Laurioux (Paris: Champion, 2005), 357–73; and id., “Spices in the Medieval Diet: a New Approach,” *Food and Foodways* 1 (1985–1987): 43–75. Compare this with the survey in Alabala, “Introduction” (see note 8), 17.

**15** Raymond Van Uytven, *De zinnelijke middeleeuwen* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1998), 151–92; and id., “Specerijen en kruiden in de Zuidnederlandse steden,” *Specerijkelijk: de specerijenroutes*, ed. Christian Cannuyer (Brussels: ASLK Dienst Cultuur, 1992), 74–89. See also John H. Munro, “The Consumption of Spices and their Costs in Late-Medieval and Early-Modern Europe: Luxuries or Necessities?,” <http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/munro5/SPICES1.pdf> (Toronto 2005; last accessed on Feb. 16, 2018); Anton Eryvncck and Wim Van Neer, “Het archeologische onderzoek van de voedsel-economie van laatmiddeleeuwse steden. Mogelijkheden en eerste resultaten voor Leuven,” *Leven te Leuven in de late Middeleeuwen*, ed. Lutgarde Bessemans (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1998), 79–94.

case-study on fifteenth and sixteenth-century Bruges by Inneke Baatsen has filled the gap partially by combining two strands of sources: on the one hand information about the material culture of food (as it appears in a sample of more than 200 post-mortem inventories), and on the other hand normative sources like manner and recipe books.<sup>16</sup>

It is our purpose in this contribution to take the conclusions resulting from this research, pointing at fundamental shifts in the food cultures in the cities of the Low Countries, and investigate whether and how these changes can also be traced in other source materials, in particular if they enter travel narratives. Did travelers, in this case pilgrims to Jerusalem in the same period of investigation (ca. 1430–1530), comment on the changes that occurred in their hometowns and did they confront them with the other food cultures they encountered on the road, and were they even aware of the role of food cultures for systems of constructing and reproducing social inequality and otherness?<sup>17</sup> Two fundamental shifts appear in Low Countries food cultures across the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Firstly, there was a dramatic change of taste in the food that was consumed. In these two centuries, the use of spices declined while the use of sugar increased as food became more geared toward “natural” flavors. Secondly, a major shift occurred in the dining practices themselves. A growing sense of sophistication is apparent both in the material culture related to dining practices and in the social behavior, as meals became an explicit instrument of expressing refinement and social distinction, in particular also in bourgeois environments.

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**16** Inneke Baatsen, “A Bittersweet Symphony: The Social Recipe of Dining Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Bruges (1438–1600),” Ph.D. diss., University of Antwerp, 2016.

**17** On the pilgrim narratives from the Low Countries, see some of the recent studies on the representation of urbanity in travelogues: Peter Stabel, “Venetië in de ogen van pelgrims. Stedelijkheid en tadservaring in laatmiddeleeuwse reisverhalen uit de Nederlanden,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 122.2 (2009): 137–38, Kim Overlaet, “Zo comt men ter stadt van Alkayeren: een analyse van de representaties van Cairo in laat vijftiende-eeuwse reisverhalen uit de Nederlanden,” *Stadsgeschiedenis* 5.1 (2010): 1–18; and Tineke Vandewalle, “Op weg naar het centrum van de wereld: een analyse van pelgrimsverhalen naar Jeruzalem en de perceptie op stedelijkheid (1480–1585),” *Stadsgeschiedenis* 7.1 (2013): 119–39. More general remarks are offered by Nicole Chareyron, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 78–102. A list of all known pilgrim descriptions from the Low Countries is published in Detlev Kraack and Jan Hirschbiegel, *Europäische Reiseberichte des späten Mittelalters: eine analytische Bibliographie*. Part 3: *Niederländische Reiseberichte*. Kieler Werkstücke Reihe D. Beiträge zur europäischen Geschichte des späten Mittelalters, 14 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2000), and also <http://www.narrative-sources.be> (last accessed on Feb. 16, 2018).

The first change, the decline of spices, can be acknowledged and verified through a study of vernacular cookbooks.<sup>18</sup> The analysis of that genre demonstrates that the seasoning of dishes in the cities of the Low Countries changed profoundly, in particular in the course of the sixteenth century. According to Baatsen, the sixteenth-century palate is “a hybrid model of taste,” not characterized any more by a “medieval” preference for spices, but not yet tending completely toward the early modern more natural palate. Oriental spices like saffron, grains of paradise, ginger and cinnamon, however, lost much of their appeal, while sugar, syrups, and flavored waters (rose water) became ubiquitous in recipes. Other spices, on the other hand, were resisting much better such drastic change: pepper, nutmeg, and cloves remained important well into the seventeenth century. The declining popularity of spices is very difficult to explain. On the one hand, as trade routes became easier and cheaper, and prices declined, spices became more affordable and lost as such their luxury status, making them paradoxically less attractive as an instrument of distinction.<sup>19</sup> But because only small amounts of spices are required even in medieval cuisine, spices, in particular pepper and sugar, had to a certain degree always been accessible for many layers in urban society. Moreover, spices were available in a wide range of qualities (and consequently also of different prices). Data on food consumption show that although the lower social ranks certainly enjoyed much less varied and copious meals than the middling ranks or urban elites did, even poorer families, albeit with less conspicuous zeal, indulged on the occasion of religious feasts, weddings, and funerals in more exclusive foods. Social difference was reflected in the frequency, quantity, and quality of the food consumed and far less in the ability to prepare or enjoy a festive meal. The shifts in food consumption can also be traced in material culture. For instance, sixteenth-century inventories contain clearly fewer sauce bowls than before.

A second major shift concerns dining practices themselves. Dining has always been an important aspect of sociability and as such also of social inequality defined both in real terms as access to food and as perception. Many studies dealing with sixteenth-century dining cultures and etiquette have rightly underlined the great social, political, economic, and cultural shifts that took place, and these shifts greatly restructured domestic space. Baatsen found out for late medieval Bruges that around 1500 dining was increasingly considered as an important

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<sup>18</sup> Baatsen, “A Bittersweet Symphony” (see note 16), 79–146.

<sup>19</sup> Stefan Halikowski Smith, “Demystifying a Change in Taste: Spices, Space, and Social Hierarchy in Europe, 1380–1750,” *The International History Review* 29.2 (2007): 237–57; here 248.

household activity.<sup>20</sup> Its cultural settings were reshaped by humanist discourse which strengthened hierarchical arrangements of conviviality.<sup>21</sup> This hierarchy was expressed both spatially and socially. Kitchens remained convivial rooms where dinner could be enjoyed, but in most households it was attributed a more informal character, whereas the entertainment of guests in separate dining rooms was considered a sign of social status and civilized behavior.<sup>22</sup>

Depending on the importance of the meal, different settings of conviviality were required, leading, of course, to processes of social polarization. Less well-off families, usually living in smaller houses, were less able to participate in this multidimensional use of domestic space. A semantic change accompanied this process of spatial and social change: the exclusivity of the dining room caused its name to change from the old and inclusive “eating room” (called *eetcamere* or *chambre ou l'on dine* in the Low Countries inventories) to the new and exclusive “salette,” with its reference to the medieval “salle,” the great hall in noble and patrician mansions. In that process kitchens were endowed with convivial material equipment, so that they could function as additional and more ordinary eating spaces besides the more polished purposely equipped dining rooms. Domestic space was actively engaged in establishing a household’s social identity.

With this spatial change, attitudes toward dining practices were shifting as well. Discourse analysis of etiquette books shows that from the late fifteenth century table manners gained new meanings directed at the individual, at politeness and self-restraint and at separating the civilized (urban, bourgeois) from the uncivilized (rural, laborers).<sup>23</sup> Hence the increased importance for clean white table linen and the emergence of individual table napkins. Glass, ceramics, and tin-glazed majolica were already present in the fifteenth century, but the differences in quality and quantity of the material media of tableware were becoming more complex in social terms. Social status was reflected by the quality of the dish and the refinement of the vessel in which it was served and consumed. Design, fashion, and refinement started to replace to a certain extent the older

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**20** Baatsen, “A Bittersweet Symphony” (see note 16) 227–338.

**21** Demmy Verbeke, “A Call for Sobriety: Sixteenth-Century Educationalists and Humanist Conviviality,” *Paedagogica Historica* 49.2 (2013): 161–73. A quantitative analysis of semantic fields in Erasmus’s *De civilitate* in Baatsen, “A Bittersweet Symphony” (see note 16), 302–08.

**22** Inneke Baatsen, Bruno Blondé and Julie De Groot, “The Kitchen between Representation and Everyday Experience, *Trading Values in Early Modern Antwerp*, ed. Christine Götteler, Bart Ramakers, and Joanna Woodall. *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 64 (2014): 162–85.

**23** For Italy, see Guido Guerzoni, “Liberalitas, Magnificentia, Splendor: The Classic Origins of Italian Renaissance Lifestyles,” *History of Political Economy* 31/Supplement (1999): 332–78.

definition of quality through intrinsic value. Although cheaper ceramics and glass instead of pewter and silver defined the new materiality of table manners, social distinction did not decrease, rather on the contrary. The “new luxuries” offered households distinction through faster fashion cycles, design, quality, and quantity. Humanist moralists were able to broaden the scope of these material changes through the printing press with a new and polished language prescribing manners and mental frameworks of civilized behavior.

These transformations of taste seem to have been strengthened by increasing social polarization and by strategies of urban elites and middle classes alike to redefine their social status.<sup>24</sup> Between elites and urban middle classes differences in dining equipment and dining practices were very often reflected only in the quantity of the objects owned and less in the ability and the desire to acquire them. The majority of middle class townspeople had separate dining rooms that were not kitchens, a few of them even had a *salette*. Their collection of individual tableware, napkins, kitchen equipment, and especially the material diversity of their table utensils closely followed the trends among the highest social groups. The lower social ranks were, however less able to live up to the ever changing expectations.

## Food on the Road: the Journal of a Late Medieval Foodie

Few ego-documents, however, have been preserved that may comment systematically on those structural changes which can be discerned from normative materials like manner books or cook books and from the material culture (and careful scrutiny of iconographic sources). Although a closer investigation of diaries or private accounts may yield significant data in the near future, few easily available sources are accessible that allow corroborating in a systematic way the findings mentioned above. The range of available sources tends to direct food historians almost by default toward the elites in society, whether these be ecclesiastical or secular. There is, however, one exception: late medieval travelogues. These are

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<sup>24</sup> For a general overview on the diverging gap between poor and rich in this period, see the recent article by Samuel K. Cohn Jr., “Rich and Poor in Western Europe, c. 1375–1475: the Political Paradox of Material Well-Being,” *Approaches to Poverty in Medieval Europe: Complexities, Contradictions, Transformations*, c. 1100–1500, ed. Sharon Farmer (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 145–73; here 162–65.



widely available from the late Middle Ages, they cover a wide range of personal travel impressions, and were written by people from often very diverse social background.

Even a first glance at the late medieval travelogues from the Low Countries, most of them pilgrim descriptions, clearly shows the lack of interest, even to a certain extent a disdain for food matters in those sources that were written by members of the aristocratic and clerical elites. On the contrary, it is in travelogues written by middle groups, merchants and bourgeois, rather than those produced by clerics and noblemen, that food appears as one of the focal points of the narrative.<sup>25</sup> Here, therefore, is a range of sources that can potentially corroborate the findings discussed above. The sample of travelogues which was used for our purposes consists of about twenty-five narratives written by pilgrims to Jerusalem in the period 1450–1540, the last great period of medieval pilgrimage, including those narratives that go beyond merely describing the Holy Places in Palestine and the devotional practices of the pilgrims. The sample includes narratives written by pilgrims coming from the Low Countries, a region with particular characteristics in-between France and Germany, which corresponds more or less to the present-day countries of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg, and parts of Germany (the northern stretches of the Rhineland around Julich and Kleve), and France (more or less the present-day départements Nord and Pas-de-Calais).

Most travelogues were from what were the densely urbanized core regions in this area, the County of Flanders (both the Dutch and French speaking parts), the County of Holland/Zeeland and the Duchy of Brabant. These three principalities had gradually become an almost integrated economic region in the Delta region of the great Rivers (Rhine, Meuse, and Scheldt) and were also brought together under the same ruler, that is, by the Burgundian Duke Philip the Good in the 1430s. In the 1470s, the heir of the Burgundian territories, Mary, daughter of Duke Charles the Bold, had married the heir of the Habsburg territories and later Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Maximilian of Habsburg, and after her premature death in 1482 (and a difficult period with political turmoil and civil war), their son Philip the Fair became the sole ruler in the Low Countries. He would eventually marry the princess-heiress of the throne of Castile and their son was to become Emperor Charles V in the Holy Roman Empire, king of Spain and ruler in most principalities of the Low Countries (the exceptions being the Prince-Bishopric of Liège and the Duchy of Guelders).

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<sup>25</sup> More general observations and more detailed reference can be found in *Perceptions of the World by Late Medieval Pilgrims at the End of the Middle Ages*, a book in preparation by Peter Stabel.

The writers of the travelogues in our sample share therefore a common political allegiance, but most of all, despite very pronounced social differences, they also share a common urban identity. All pilgrims, whether they were high noblemen, local gentry, bourgeois and merchants, or craftsmen, were very familiar with cities and the urban way of life. In the core regions of the Low Countries, between a third and half of the population lived in a city, a figure unparalleled even in northern Italy, and even the countryside was partly urbanized, as a lot of rural industries complemented the traditional agricultural activities of peasants and an urban market was never more than a couple of hours walking away. Cities were in these regions seldom more than ten miles apart. Moreover, cities played a key role in the political relations with their Burgundian and Habsburg rulers and to a large extent the big cities, like Ghent and Bruges in Flanders, Brussels and Antwerp in Brabant or Dordrecht and Amsterdam in Holland, could force the prince to abide with their mercantile and industrial ambitions and aspirations.

One of the pilgrims who left a description of his travels was Jacques Le Saige. He traveled to Jerusalem in 1519. Jacques was certainly not a man without means. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem was beyond the possibilities of those who barely could survive on a moderate wage. The crossing of the Mediterranean on board of one of the Venetian galleys or sailing ships alone cost about 50 ducats, a huge sum by all means. Moreover, most pilgrims traveled on horseback through Europe, and even using this expensive but relatively quick way of travel, it took at best almost a year to reach the Holy Land and return home again, a full year without any income for those who lived from wages or mercantile activities. Jacques must therefore have been a wealthy man.

He lived in Douai, a city of about 20,000 inhabitants which was a regional trading hub in the southern parts of the County of Flanders (in the county's French speaking part), about 100km from the region's economic capital: Bruges. Douai was an important relay market for the grain trade in the very fertile regions of Walloon-Flanders. The city was also linked by river with the equally productive plains of Picardy in northern France. But above all it was a leading manufacturing center for woolen cloth, the backbone of the industrial development in medieval Flanders. Although the industry was in decline already since the middle of the fourteenth century, it still was by far the biggest employer in the city and the famed and expensive woollens from Douai could be found in most export regions for Flemish textiles. Unlike most other production centers, Douai would even remain active, with Ypres in Flanders, Leiden in Holland, and Mechelen in Brabant, in the manufacture of expensive heavy cloth until deep into the sixteenth century.

Jacques Le Saige was a textile merchant dealing in woolen and silk fabrics, so he must have been well acquainted with the local industry. His background as a businessman is also shaping the structure of his narrative. At moments, certainly

when he describes his travels through Europe, his account almost resembles a business ledger. In his introduction he states clearly his intention. His travelogue is to register the “inns, shelters and expenses” on the way to Jerusalem (*gistes, repaistres et depens*). Hence, the book lists all the places where he stayed, the quality of his accommodation and the food he got there, and he points out how much he had paid for all of this. Certainly, in the first part of his account, he was very careful in mentioning the prices he paid for everything he needed on the road, and the appreciation of having made a good bargain or having been cheated is never that far away from his observations. Travel was important for him and for his identity as a merchant. He even used his reputation as a pilgrim as a marketing tool to boost his business afterwards. His device stated “Praise Our Lord, I have returned” (*Loé soit Dieu, j'en suis revenue*), associating his business and bourgeois identity explicitly with the pilgrimage he made to Jerusalem (and another one to St. James in Galicia).

Jacques Le Saige left Douai on 19 March 1519. He was probably in his prime (he is documented to have died only in 1550), and Jacques was a keen and experienced traveler. In his travelogue, which he wrote only a couple of years after his pilgrimage and which was printed in 1523, he presents himself as a curious and enthusiastic traveler who utterly enjoyed the places he visited (and not only those places linked to the pilgrimage itself or any other way for expressing devotion) and who was well versed in finding places to sleep or to eat, to arrange horses, or to find his way on the roads across Europe. Once on board of their Venetian ship or in the Holy Land, pilgrims, however, no longer relied on their own resourcefulness but placed themselves under the custody of the Venetian shipmaster and, once in the Holy Land, of the Franciscan Friars at Mt Sion in Jerusalem.

Le Saige was also a fast traveler. He met with a couple of countrymen in the nearby episcopal city of Cambrai and, after some confusion about missed appointments, the party of three traveled on horseback through France, Burgundy, and French Savoy to reach the Alps near Mont Cenis. The crossing of the Alps proved hard, even when the worst of the winter snow must have disappeared by the time they got there, but they made it into the Val d'Aosta and traveled via Asti, Bologna, Florence, Rome, and Loreto to Ancona on the Adriatic, where they took a boat to cover the final stretch to Venice itself. Two months after their departure the group reached Venice on May 14, where they found a shipmaster very quickly. He was to take care of them during their crossing of the Mediterranean to Jaffa. Le Saige returned to Venice from the Holy Land in October and was home again in December. Compared to other pilgrims in the same period, eight months was remarkably fast for the longest and most dangerous pilgrimage in Christian Europe. The fact that he did not have to worry about money certainly played an important role. He had plenty to spend and as a merchant he was able

to make good arrangements with the Italian banking facilities. But he had been lucky as well, encountering no great difficulty himself during the crossing of the Mediterranean and in the Holy Land itself.

Jacques Le Saige's most direct encounters with food in his travelogue were during his travels in Europe itself and during his stay in Venice, waiting for his ship to leave. It is during his voyage through France and Italy that he himself had to make decisions about the food he ate, the company he kept, and the inns where he slept. And Jacques did so very consciously. The majority of his overnight stays and many of the inns where he had lunch were scrutinized and assessed, and given a favorable or a less favorable rating. In many ways, Le Saige's account can be read as a real travel guide with practical advice for his readers about where to find good accommodation or to have a decent meal. It is to a certain extent comparable to the information in present-day guides like "Lonely Planet" or "Tripadvisor" online.

Jacques was certainly not the only pilgrim to add qualitative assessments about the places they visited or the accommodation they had to spend the night in. Venice was the place where Low Countries pilgrims spent the longest time. It is in the lagoon city that they had to wait for their merchant galley or sailing ship to depart for the Holy Land. Most pilgrims arrived in the city in late spring to leave for the Holy Land only in early summer, driven by the seasonal northwest winds which would speed up their voyage.

Venice was also the most costly part of their voyage. Not only did they have to pay their shipmasters, on the average in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century about forty to sixty ducats per person, a huge sum, certainly for less well-off pilgrims like the barber Arent Willemszoon or the parish priest Jan Goverts, both from the town of Delft in Holland, who were the only ones to have chosen to travel through Europe on a cart instead of riding a horse like all other pilgrims. The price for accommodation and the cost of living were also much higher in Venice than elsewhere in Europe. The travel descriptions, as a result, often advise their readers, future pilgrims, to buy only a part of their food rations for use on board in the markets of Venice, but prefer instead the cheaper and equally well-supplied markets along the Istrian and Dalmatian coast in the Adriatic, where the Venetian ships stopped to resupply or organize trade. Only for some specific and specialized items should they visit the Rialto markets, to buy for example spices (pilgrims used nutmeg to combat sea sickness), vinegars (to add to their water rations, which after a certain time became almost undrinkable), and all goods that had to be transported in small barrels (like wine or butter). Still the high prices pilgrims had to pay at the Rialto markets did not stop most of them of indeed supplying themselves with all things necessary in Venice itself.

Venice evoked mixed feelings. The pilgrims tried to describe the magic of the city, but they also noticed the city's sleazy side. Venice was filled to bursting with holy relics; there was an almost endless succession of (mostly) religious festivities, like the important Corpus Christi celebration at St Mark's in which the pilgrims were even expected to participate actively themselves. But at the same time the pilgrims point at the brothels of the city (some of them even visited by the pilgrims as things not to be missed) and at the Venetian women who are at the same time bossy and dressed in transparent clothing, which left little to the imagination of the male pilgrims. It was a strange mixture of sacral space and sin city. The markets of Rialto appealed to the same kind of contradictions. On the one hand, the pilgrims from the Low Countries – need it to be reminded, all of them coming from a very urbanized social system – were fascinated by the wealth and diversity of the Venetian markets, by the complexities of its banking facilities (most pilgrims drew money on the Venetian exchange in order to avoid carrying too much cash along), by its political and military power and the cosmopolitanism of its society. Yet at the same time they grudgingly saw their purses being emptied by all of these things. They complained of the high fees they had to pay to their exchange agents, of the unfavorable exchange rates, and of course of the high prices of those goods that were considered necessary on board to supplement the regular ship's diet.<sup>26</sup>

Jan Hendrikszoon van Beveren, a pilgrim coming from a small noble family in the county of Holland who traveled to Jerusalem in 1536, is terribly particular about the cost of travel during the whole journey. But Venice was a nightmare for the stingy Dutchman. His first remarks about the city, after stating that his travel company found an inn called "The White Lion," one of the places near San Bartolomeo square that was frequently used by pilgrims from Germany and the Low Countries,<sup>27</sup> did not concern their pursuit of travel arrangements or their visits to the many relics kept in the Venetian churches; instead, they concerned the terribly high cost of living. Jan had to spent no less than 15 Venetian solidi, which makes nine Low Countries *stuiver* per day for room and board, substantially more than a day's wage of a skilled artisan, for example a master mason or

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<sup>26</sup> Venice's reputation as a money-consuming tourist trap in the modern era builds on what seems to be already a well-established medieval tradition: see Robert C. Davis and Gary R. Marvin, *Venice, the Tourist Maze: A Cultural Critique of the World's Most Touristed City* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA, and London: University of California Press, 2004), 10–29.

<sup>27</sup> Philippe Braunstein, *Les Allemands à Venise (1380–1520)*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 372 (Rome: École française de Rome, 2016), 374–379.

carpenter, in Antwerp in the same period.<sup>28</sup> But also the food in the city he found ludicrously expensive. Jan van Beveren was certainly careful about his money, but he was far from being the only pilgrim to complain about the price levels in Venice. Even a *bon-vivant* like Jacques le Saige was astonished by the amount of money Venice took from his well-supplied travel budget.<sup>29</sup>

Yet Jacques Le Saige does much more than describe the high cost of living in Venice or list the specific places, and he details even how much he paid for dinner and a bed for the night. As a merchant well-versed in making qualitative assessments and translating these in a business-like fashion into a ledger, his travelogue looks at times just like that, a ledger, an account of where he spent what amount of money, usually also with some kind of reflection whether it had been a good deal or not.<sup>30</sup> It is clear, therefore, that the Le Saige's travelogue was based on notes the author had taken along the road. Nonetheless, his expenditure also seems quite standardized: he usually paid 12d Flemish for an overnight stay with dinner and about 8d for lunch. An average daily wage of an Antwerp mason was in this period about 6 stuiver or 12d Flemish (so the equivalent of the cost of an overnight stay with dinner for Jacques Le Saige). Still there was also quite some variation below and above these figures, so the costs reflected probably more or less Le Saige's real expenditure. Other travelers give some detail as well, although less systematically, about their travel costs. But Jacques Le Saige is the only one also to add comments about the quality of the food and services he received.

His comments during his first two weeks traveling through France are clearly less systematic than his later assessments of food and accommodation. Once he

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**28** Herman Van der Wee, "Prices and Wages as Development Variables: A Comparison between England and the Southern Netherlands, 1400–1700," *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae. Studies on the History of the Netherlands* 10 (1978): 58–78.

**29** Hyppolite R. Duthilloeul, *Voyage de Jacques le Saige de Douai à Rome, Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, Venice, Jérusalem et autres saint lieux* (Douai: Adam d'Aubers, 1852), 63. On Le Saige, see also Martin David, "Deux pèlerins de Compostelle. Jean de Zillebeke, seigneur de Comines et Jacques le Saige de Douai," *Bulletin de la commission historique du département du Nord* 35 (1938): 26; and id., "Jacques le Saige, pèlerin de Compostelle et l'hôpital du Petit-Saint-Jacques à Douai," *Miscellanea Historica in honorem Leonis van der Essen Universitatis catholicae in oppido Lovaniensi iam annos XXXV professoris* (Brussels and Paris: Editions universitaires, 1947), 601–20.

**30** On bookkeeping practices of merchants in the Low Countries around 1500, see Raymond De Roover, "The Development of Accounting Prior to Luca Pacioli According to the Account Books of Medieval Merchants," *Studies in the History of Accounting*, ed. Ananias Ch. Littleton and Basil S. Yamey (Homewood, IL: Irwin, 1956), 114–74. Botho Verbist, "Traditie of innovatie? Wouter Ameyde, een makelaar in het laatmiddeleeuwse Brugge 1498–1507," Ph.D. diss., University of Antwerp, 2014.

arrived in the mountainous regions (present-day French Savoy and Piedmont), his assessments become more regular. In general the inns where he had lunch or dinner or where he stayed the night in the Alps were considered as being very poor. He described, for example, St-Jean-de-Maurienne as a small but densely populated town with a church holding important relics (two fingers of none other than St John the Baptist), but he was “badly treated” in one of the local inns. Hence, he commented that the 14d Flemish he had paid were ludicrously expensive for their poor evening meal and accommodation.<sup>31</sup> A couple of days later Jacques Le Saige’s tone was completely different. Upon arrival in the small mountain town of Suze, in Piedmont,<sup>32</sup> the view of their welcome was instead very positive. They were staying in a local inn called “The White Lion,” where they had two sorts of fish prepared with fried frogs for dinner. Le Saige traveled in Lent, so except for one evening meal, when he had meat, he usually ate fish, snails, or frogs. Also the wine was excellent and Jacques paid the slightly cheaper price of only 13d for his room and board. Indeed, a good bargain in the eyes of the Douai merchant, and he did not fail mentioning this: they were “treated very well” (*bien traités*).<sup>33</sup>

**Table 1:** Qualitative Assessments of Food and Accommodation (Jacques le Saige).

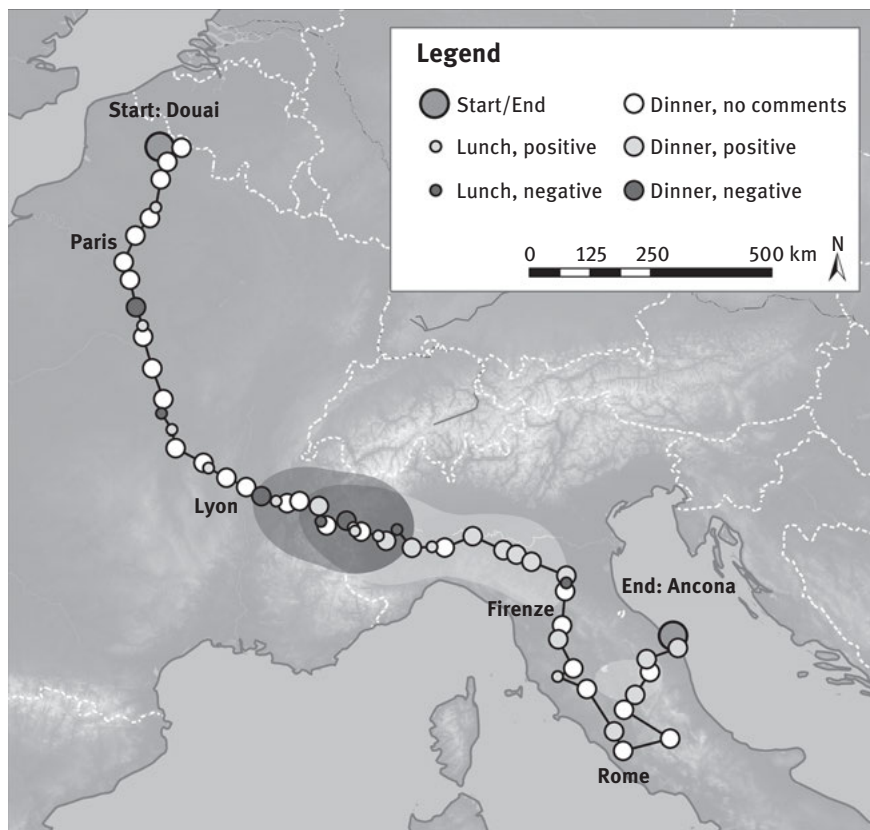
	N travel days	N with assessment		Lunch		Dinner	
		Lunch	dinner	% positive	% negative	% positive	% negative
France	17	4	3	75	25	33	67
Savoy and Alps	5	2	2	50	50	50	50
Piedmont	4	4	3	75	25	100	0
Italy	19	3	10	67	33	100	0
Totals	45	13	18	69	31	83	17

When analyzing Le Saige’s assessments (see Table 1 and Fig. 1), one cannot but conclude that Le Saige had a favorable opinion of the food and the services he received in most Transalpine and Italian inns, that he had mixed feelings about the quality of food in France and that in general he did not like much his meals and accommodation in the Alpine region (in particular French Savoy provided

<sup>31</sup> Duthilloeul, *Voyage de Jacques le Saige* (see note 29), 9.

<sup>32</sup> Suze-la-Rousse, French Savoy.

<sup>33</sup> Duthilloeul, *Voyage de Jacques le Saige* (see note 29), 12.



**Fig. 1:** Map of Jacques le Saige's Travel from Douai to Venice indicating his Qualitative Assessment of the Meals and Accommodation.

him with a couple of bad experiences). In total, Jacques mentions over eighty specific stops<sup>34</sup> on his way to Venice, via Paris, Lyon, Chambéry, Asti, Bologna, Florence, Rome, Loreto, and Ancona (where he took a boat to Venice). These were the places where he spent some time either for lunch (*disner*) or for dinner (*souper*), and arranged an overnight stay (*logis*). For thirteen inns where he had lunch and for eighteen inns where he slept and had his evening dinner there is a qualitative assessment (more than one third of the theoretical number of lunches

<sup>34</sup> This is eighty places mentioned of a theoretical number of ninety between Douai and Ancona. Le Saige was on the road for forty-five days. Places where he spent more than one night, like Rome, are counted only once. He gives a qualitative appreciation of his lunches and dinners/accommodation for about one third of these places.



and dinners he had while traveling). In most overnight stops he is very enthusiastic, either because he spent a good night (in five cases he mentions his *bon logis*), but mostly because his group was treated well with good quality food and an appropriate quantity of food (no less than fifteen times he mentions that they were well cared for (*bien traités*). The description “we were well treated” seems above all an appreciation of the food they received; otherwise Le Saige only describes what he thought of the accommodation (*bon logis*, *meschant logis*). Most of the good experiences were in Italian towns, like Asti or Alessandria. The closer he got to his destiny, the pilgrim cities of Rome and Loreto, and to Venice, the point of departure of his sea journey, the more he seems to be pleased with the quality of the reception. But he was also more inclined to give an assessment as well closing down on his destination. If Piedmont was particularly appreciated, in other regions of Italy (Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Lazio, and Marche) as well the good experiences clearly outnumber the bad ones. In France and (the French part of) Savoy it seems to be the other way around. Two inns in France were described as bad places (*meschant logis*), while he claims to have been treated badly for his meals in five places, mostly in Savoy just before and during the crossing of the Alps.

Although he is very keen on constantly reminding the reader of the incessant rhythm of his lunches and dinners, Jacques is more hesitant to give details about the food he ate during his journey through Europe. The group traveled during Lent and in the Easter Period and this timing clearly influenced the menu on the road. Before Easter Jacques only mentions having eaten fish dishes. When his comments about the quality of the food are positive, he is more likely also to mention the kinds of fish he was served. In Asti, once across the Mont Cenis and the Alps, he was served different kinds of fresh water fish: pike (*broche*), carp (*carpe*), and sturgeon (*esturgeon*), accompanied by crayfish (*creviches*), snails (*limechons*), and frogs (*raines*). Elsewhere the choice was less diverse, but it was the quality of the food that was stressed. In Alessandria they enjoyed frogs that were better than anywhere else (*meilleurs que les autres*).

Only once the rules of fast in Lent were not respected. In Borgo San Donino (Fidenza, Parma) Jacques's travel company was served various sorts of meat, one week before Easter. But this was clearly an exception; in the week before Easter on their way to Rome they only had fish in Florence, Tavarnelle, Siena, and Rocca. In the last town, the first one in the territory of the Papal States, it is mentioned that the fish was skewed and grilled (*poisons a force*), strangely the only preparation that is mentioned in Le Saige's travel description. Once the Easter period in Rome had passed, the menu changed drastically. In Petriolo (Macerata), a town at one day's travel distance from Loreto, Jacques was not only treated very well in fine rooms with

Turkish rugs on the wall and on the table.<sup>35</sup> But he was also served good meat (*nous fusmes bien traictés de viande*), and in Loreto there was also meat on the menu.<sup>36</sup>

In places where they were allegedly treated badly, this is often associated with bad wine. Coming from a beer country like Flanders himself, Jacques is clearly focused on vineyards and wine. In Reggio Emilia, in-between Parma and Bologna, he writes that his inn was pleasantly overlooking the vines (*plaisant regard des vignes*), and a description of the wine-, olive- and date-producing countryside he went through is standard fare all over his travelogue. Good or bad wine is clearly an important qualification in assessing the level of the services he made use of. The bad experiences when crossing the Alps in Savoy were quite general and always associated with bad wine, but there are also exceptions. On the other hand, good wine often inspired a positive assessment. They were well treated in Rivoli, a town in Piedmont near Turin, and here the quality is explicitly linked to the fact that the pilgrims received no less than ten sorts of wine from the Piedmont.

## Perceptions of Food Abroad: a Class Issue?

The fixation with food was clearly not a coincidence in Jacques Le Saige's case. When analyzing the pilgrim descriptions from the Low Countries which go further than just listing the indulgences that come with the great pilgrimage, one cannot but conclude that food was important to many, but that it was surely also linked to class. For some groups in (urban) society food seems to have been attributed a more significant place in the construction and reproduction of their social and cultural identity than for others. In some narratives all matters of food receive much a greater importance and significance, while in others food is only occasionally mentioned, almost by coincidence.

The use of food in the travel descriptions is therefore very diverse. Food serves many purposes for the development of the travel narrative. In many cases, dealings with food are used as a measure of time, to divide the day into morning, afternoon, and evening. The purpose is clear. As a narrative device it allows a

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<sup>35</sup> Oriental carpets were in this period only seldom decorated Low Countries interiors, although they were becoming increasingly popular in the course of the sixteenth century. See Peter Stabel, "A Taste for the Orient? Cosmopolitan Demand for 'Exotic' Durable Consumables in Late Medieval Bruges," *London and Beyond. Essays in Honour of Derek Keene*, ed. Matthew Davies and James Galloway (London: Institute for Historical Research, 2012), 87–101.

<sup>36</sup> Duthilloeul, *Voyage de Jacques le Saige* (see note 29), 32.

fine chronological sequence of events which in the eyes of the readers of the pilgrim descriptions could be very repetitive. Meals and meal times provide a framework in which the narrative can develop, but much more than that they define in many respect also the rhythm of the journey, the rhythm of normality also in what was in the eyes of the traveler and of his readers an extraordinary venture.

Food, and the way it is presented in the narratives, is defined by familiar food staples and by familiar social rituals. Exotic food and diverging food habits are mentioned in some narratives, but food serves mainly to describe the familiar. Pilgrims from all social classes refer to social contacts they had with either locals or co-travelers, and most of the time these social contacts are celebrated within the context of the familiar surroundings in an inn or a guesthouse while drinking and eating together. The place attributed to good wine in many of the travel narratives is striking. Meals and drinking are indicative of social exchange. It is presented as a way to compensate the hardships of travel and the strangeness of the foreign worlds they travel through. Food seems to connect the traveler with the familiar in unfamiliar contexts, and as a result exotic foodstuffs and strange eating habits do not receive center stage.

Food is also very much defined by the traveler's social status. The pilgrims who left travel descriptions were certainly not poor people. The cost of crossing the Mediterranean by itself was a formidable social threshold, and the challenge of not being able to work for money must have added to the social selection of the travelers. But nonetheless, pilgrims tend to have various and often very different social backgrounds. It is these backgrounds that defined the food experiences on the road, and the way the pilgrims reported about them. Devotional austerity and religiously inspired frugality were not among the shared values on the road. Only religious travelers, monks, and priests seem to have been more discreet when food was concerned. For some of the traveling clergy, the pilgrimage to the Holy places was also about personal discipline and self-control. For most others, holy travel was no reason to change their food habits. Clearly on the contrary, many, and Jacques Le Saige is only but the most enthusiastic foodie, indulged in the food along the way and took great pleasure from it.

Not all pilgrims are equally outspoken about their culinary adventures. It was usually only in Venice where the pilgrims waited for a ship to take them to Palestine, that travelogues started talking about it. Georges Lengherand, the mayor of Mons in Hainaut, who was certainly not the most talkative about food in our sample of travelogues, if it was not linked directly to his own status, tells that he had to buy not only supplies in Venice for his long sea journey across the Mediterranean, but also for a short boat trip from Venice to Ancona on his way to Rome in April of 1486. He bought bread, wine, fresh butter but also Mediterranean

staples like dates, almonds, and even oranges.<sup>37</sup> In Rome he started to take on the habit of mentioning food to highlight his own social importance. He explains how he stayed in the house of the bishop of Tournai, one of the main episcopal cities in the Low Countries, where he had a wonderful supper and, as he adds, where he enjoyed excellent Burgundy wine from Beaune. It seems he thought it quite normal that a man of his status and political prestige was received in the Roman house of a bishop and his expensive Burgundy was equally fitting.<sup>38</sup> High noblemen, like de Lannoy and de la Broquière, had a similar attitude toward mentioning their dining habits on the road. Their comments are incorporated into the story whenever their noble status is relevant for the narrative. Food is linked not to pleasure or to survival in the way a bourgeois like Jacques Le Saige talks about it; it is foremost and almost exclusively discussed as an intrinsic part in constructing social and political status.

## Food in the Middle East

Bertrandon de la Broquière was a completely different kind of traveler compared with the Douaisien merchant Jacques Le Saige. He belonged to the high nobility of the Burgundian state and made it to first esquire at the duke's court. His voyage to the Holy Land in 1432–1433 is said not to have been inspired so much by devotion for the places where Christ had suffered, but that it was rather a mission of espionage in the service of the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, who was obsessed with the idea of organizing a crusade against the Ottomans, since his father John the Fearless was captured and ransomed by the Turks in the ill-fated crusade of Nicopolis in 1396. The plan never materialized. Pragmatism rather than ideological fervor or personal frustration inspired the duke's policy.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Marquis de Godefroy Ménilglaise, *Voyage de Georges Lengherand, mayeur de Mons en Haynaut, à Venise, Rome, Jérusalem, Mont Sinai & le Kayre, 1485–1486* (Mons: Masquillier & Dequesne, 1861), 39. See also Marie-Cécile Bruwier, Gilles Docquier and Alain Marchandisse, “En tous quartiers ou j’ay esté. Le récit de pèlerinage de Georges Lengherand, mayeur de Mons (1486–1487): une esquisse,” *Publications du Centre Européen d’Etudes Bourguignonnes (XIVe–XVIe s.)* 56 (2016): 191–211.

<sup>38</sup> De Godefroy Ménilglaise, *Voyage de Georges Lengherand* (see note 37), 59. Lengherand's native town of Mons was not part of the diocese of Tournai, but of the neighboring bishopric of Cambrai.

<sup>39</sup> The famous banquet of the “Pheasant” where he took a vow to take up the cross is only one of the many occasions where Philip pledged himself to go on crusade. These efforts increased after Constantinople had been taken by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II in 1453 (various contributions on the Burgundian attitudes toward the crusade in *Le Banquet du Faisan, 1454. L’Occident face au défi de l’Empire ottoman*, ed. Marie-Thérèse Caron and Denis Clauzel (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 1997).

De la Broquière did not quite follow the same trajectory as other travelers who went to the Holy Land. He left Italy from Venice and visited the Holy Places. But after having paid his respect to the Holy Sites, he returned via Anatolia to meet up with the Turkic forces, who were assailing the last strongholds of the Byzantine Empire and he returned via landlocked roads across the Balkans.

The nobleman's approach to food was very different from that of ordinary pilgrims, rich and poor alike. In de la Broquière's account, food is not so much part of the logistics of travel, it is an occasion for social interaction, for displaying status, for talking to local dignitaries. When he was still in the Holy Land on Mamluk territory, and not yet involved in probing the Ottoman enemy, there are rare occasions that he talks about food. After having observed the cotton fields around Mount Tabor in Palestine, he tells that he had brought along wine and chicken for lunch, but he cannot leave out that his guide brought him to the house of a local notable person who, seeing the wine, thought – and in de la Broquière's eyes quite logically – that his guest was a man of consequence.<sup>40</sup> When being received in houses of local aristocrats, he talks a little bit of the food, but gives much more detail about the way he was received. After having spent the day on horseback trying out Mamluk saddles in the vicinity of Baalbek (Lebanon), he was the guest of a Mamluk lord for evening dinner. He describes how the meal was quite frugal to his standards with only bread, cheese and milk, but that the dining room was decorated with small round table cloths of four feet in diameter with strings on them so that they could be taken along as purses. He adds rather admiringly that in these regions no meal, good or bad, passes by without thanking the Lord.<sup>41</sup>

When he crossed the Mamluk-Turkish border and entered Anatolia via Antioch, he started meeting Turkic and Turkoman tribes. Here his sense for detail increases, his observations of local customs and habits, also food customs, become sharper. In the vicinity of Antioch, de la Broquière visited a tent camp of a Turkoman tribe. He ate their traditional dish, thin round cakes of bread folded and filled with curdled milk, which the Turks call *yogurt*. Cheese and bread were the main food staples, he says, and bread is not baked as long as in Europe and it remains soft (and difficult to chew, he adds). Furthermore the Turkish and Turkmen tribes tended to eat their meat raw or dried in the sun.<sup>42</sup> At times, he gives more detail. In Bosnia close to the Ottoman-Christian frontier he offers a detailed description how the Turks live, fight, and eat, and add to these basic

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<sup>40</sup> Charles Schefer, *Le voyage d'outremer de Bertrandon de La Broquière, premier écuyer tranchant et conseiller de Philippe le Bon, duc de Bourgogne* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1892), 299.

<sup>41</sup> Schefer, *Le voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière* (see note 40), 308.

<sup>42</sup> Schefer, *Le voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière* (see note 40), 314–19.

staples also honey, grapes and various fruits, and herbs which they put in a stew or potage with flour.<sup>43</sup> In Cappadocia, he talks about a delicacy prepared of peeled green walnuts coated in a sweet wine mixture (resembling today's honey coated nuts that can be found everywhere on Turkish markets),<sup>44</sup> and in Bursa, the early fourteenth-century capital of the Ottomans not so far from Constantinople itself, he ate caviar with olive oil, food he considered only suitable for the local Greeks, implying that the Turks themselves did not touch these fish eggs.<sup>45</sup>

But all these remarks are accidental in de la Broquière's long narrative. They do not compare to the systematic way in which food marks the daily rhythms in most non-noble pilgrim narratives. It is only on festive occasions when the nobleman was attending dinner parties organized by his Turkish hosts that he is more inclined to talk about local food customs, for example when he visited the sultan's court in the company of the Milanese ambassador in February 1433. He had joined the ambassador's party and witnessed the culinary arrangements of the reception. He paid a lot of attention to the materiality of the meal. The sultan ate from leather table-coverings, meat was brought to him on gilded plates while his officers used tin ware, one plate filled with mutton and white rice per four persons. There were no personal cups for drink, but in the corner of the hall de la Broquière saw one large silver drinking vessel filled with a liquid, either wine or water, he did not know, used by many of the guests to quench their thirst. The guests could not start eating before the sultan himself had begun, and this time, de la Broquière remarks, he did not, so guests had to wait until the sultan had left the room.<sup>46</sup>

Non-noble travelers described their encounters with food in the Middle East very differently. Jacques le Saige arrived there on August 1, 1519. He reports that his guides, or *dragomans*, received cheese, bread, and above all lots of wine from the ship's captain, so that they were almost instantly drunk.<sup>47</sup> Despite the Muslim ban on alcohol, wine was often a way to smooth relations with the local population. Peter de Smet from Brussels attended a lavish meal on board once the ship had entered the port of Jaffa. The meal was excellent, De Smet writes down, and also very "profitable for the soul."<sup>48</sup> Once on land they were taken care of by their

<sup>43</sup> Schefer, *Le voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière* (see note 40), 362.

<sup>44</sup> Schefer, *Le voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière* (see note 40), 328–29.

<sup>45</sup> Schefer, *Le voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière* (see note 40), 332.

<sup>46</sup> Schefer, *Le voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière*, 350 (see note 40).

<sup>47</sup> The role of the dragoman in the Islamic world is discussed in Bruce Travis, "Commercial Conflict Resolution Across the Religious Divide in the Thirteenth-Century Mediterranean," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 30.1 (2015): 19–38.

<sup>48</sup> Tilia De Mol, "Om te wetenene ende het verstant te nemen van onser reysen. Pelgrimsreisverslagen in de late middeleeuwen: het verhaal van Peter De Smet," M.A. thesis, Ghent University, 2007, 186.

Muslim guides, who provided them with food: usually bread, raisins, and boiled eggs.<sup>49</sup> Once in Jerusalem, the men and women were housed separately by the Franciscans and the Poor Clares respectively. Jan van Beveren says that they were sufficiently provided by the Friars with bread and wine, which they received for free, but that for all extras, the pilgrims were left to their own resources.<sup>50</sup> They sometimes bought boiled eggs to accompany their regular diet.<sup>51</sup>

Le Saige, who had crossed Europe always assessing the quality of his lodgings and meals, did not stop doing this in Palestine. The wine the Friars at Mt Sion gave him after the long and thirst-causing journey from Jaffa was one of the best wines he ever had drunk, he said. It was coming from the vineyards of the Friars themselves.<sup>52</sup> In 1505 Peter de Smet stayed in the Friar's a hospital at Ramla between Jaffa and Jerusalem. The hospital had been founded by his own prince, Philip the Fair of Habsburg-Burgundy to assist the pilgrims. The hospital, he wrote, provided the pilgrims only with the bare necessities. The pilgrims had to sleep on the floor, but they were grateful for the fresh water from a well-provided cistern and they had bread, eggs and fruit, but there was no wine. De Smet was also served boiled chicken. It was, so the wealthy Brussels burgher claims, badly prepared.<sup>53</sup> But food could be much better. While visiting the many churches of Jerusalem Le Saige describes having bought wonderful roasted chicken, tasty flat bread and raisins.<sup>54</sup>

In contrast to the high nobility on the road, small noblemen like Georges Lengherand and Ambrosius Zeebout's narrative of the journey of the Ghent politician Joos van Ghiste, seem to conform more to the bourgeois habits of integrating food practices in their travel narratives.<sup>55</sup> But rarely is food as central as

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49 Duthilloeul, *Le voyage de Jacques Le Saige* (see note 29), 98–99.

50 Jan van Herwaarden and A.I. Menalda-van der Hoeven, "Een Jeruzalemreis in 1536. Reisverslag van Jan Hendrikszoon van Beveren," *Nederlandse Historische Bronnen* 5 (1985): 7–67; here 41.

51 The passage is one of the rare examples of direct speech in the reports of the pilgrims. He describes the street vendors shouting "ove cotete ades," eggs that have just been boiled: Duthilloeul, *Le voyage de Jacques Le Saige* (see note 29), 107.

52 Duthilloeul, *Le voyage de Jacques Le Saige* (see note 29), 104. See also Michele Campopiano, "Islam, Jews and Eastern Christianity in Late Medieval Pilgrims Guidebooks: Some Examples from the Franciscan Convent of Mount Sion" *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 24.1 (2012): 75–89.

53 De Mol, *Peter De Smet* (see note 48), 187–88.

54 For example Duthilloeul, *Le voyage de Jacques Le Saige* (see note 29), 121.

55 See also Jacques Charles Lemaire, "Images de la Terre sainte dans le 'Voyage' de Georges Lengherand," *Un exotisme littéraire médiéval ? Actes du colloque du Centre d'Études Médiévales et Dialectales de Lille 3, Université Charles-de-Gaulle – Lille 3, 6 et 7 octobre 2006*, ed. Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas (Lille: Université Charles de Gaulle – Lille III, 2008), 165–82.

in the descriptions of the more modest townsmen, be they artisans or merchants. For the mayor of Mons Georges Lengherand, traveling in 1486, food is primarily a way of dividing the daytime in morning (after breakfast, before lunch), afternoon (after lunch, before dinner) and evening (after dinner). It provides a temporal framework for the narrative itself, rather than revealing a genuine interest in the description of food patterns. When food practices or food staples appear in the narrative, it is much more likely to appear in the didactic parts of the story, in order to set the stage or to talk in almost anthropological observations of local customs. Lengherand talks about the strange food practices of the Mamluks who do not eat long fruits and vegetables, like *concombres* (a word that was used for both cucumbers and squash), and that they cut their bread not in long stripes like Europeans do but in squares.<sup>56</sup>

Zeebout and Van Ghistele describe the region between Jerusalem and Bethlehem as a land filled with beautiful gardens and orchards with apple trees, almonds, olives, figs, and pomegranates.<sup>57</sup> While in the vicinity of Cairo there were country estates or “houses of pleasure” (*huusekins van plaisancen*) of the wealthy Cairenes, where they could enjoy all kinds of herbs, spices, vegetables like salads, cucumbers, carrots, onions, melons, pumpkins, eggplants, radishes, and an abundance of fruit trees (apples, pomegranates, oranges, lemons, plums, olives, almonds, and figs).<sup>58</sup> It is to plants and animals that most attention goes, to markets and agricultural practices, rather than to personal food consumption. The traveler is foremost an anthropological observer, not so much an observer of culinary traditions. Only occasionally do Zeebout and Van Ghistele report on one of the striking features of Cairo that people tended to eat not in their homes, but outside in the streets and inns (*cabaretten ofte vettewarien*) where all kinds of street food are sold (bread, meat, fish and all kinds of delicious fruits, but only water for drink, no wine).<sup>59</sup>

Only once in a while specific travel experiences of the pilgrims themselves pop up. Crossing the desert between Palestine and Egypt, Georges Lengherand stresses the importance of water supply, and he advises pilgrims to look out for goat skins that could be filled with wine.<sup>60</sup> But this happens rarely. Concrete food

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<sup>56</sup> De Godefroy Ménilglaise, *Le voyage de Georges Lengherand* (see note 37), 180.

<sup>57</sup> Renaat J. G. A. A. Gaspar, *Ambrosius Zeebout, Tvoyage van Mher Joos van Ghistele* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 104 and 171.

<sup>58</sup> Gaspar, *Joos van Ghistele* (see note 57) 191.

<sup>59</sup> Gaspar, *Joos van Ghistele* (see note 57), 174. On food in medieval Cairo, see Paulina B. Lewicka, *Food and Foodways of Medieval Cairenes* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 351–79. See also Albrecht Classen, “Travel Space as Constructed Space: Arnold von Harff Observes the Arabic Space,” *German Studies Review* 33.2 (2010): 375–88.

<sup>60</sup> De Godefroy Ménilglaise, *Le voyage de Georges Lengherand* (see note 37), 156 and 166.



experiences make room for distant observations about food practices in general. In this sense, the members of the lower nobility resemble also their more prestigious colleagues of the high nobility.

## Food Encounters and Food Hierarchies

Hence, the place of food in late medieval travel narratives offers foremost insights into food practices and food attitudes of particular groups in European society. Although the encounters of northern Europeans with other Mediterranean food cultures were commented on, the description of Mediterranean food staples, vegetables and fruits, and sometimes even culinary customs demonstrates little surprise and not even unfamiliarity. Dates, olives, figs, and pomegranates were offered at the markets of the Low Countries as well. They were neither unknown food staples to a wealthy merchant from Douai nor probably not even to a modest barber from Delft. Late medieval cookbooks from northern Europe and even the famous Parisian *ménagier* had knowledge of them and made plenty of use of them as well.

Difference therefore is not central to the pilgrims' observations. It is true that they give precious little information about the ways food is prepared in Mediterranean Europe and the Middle East or how different their own food customs were from what they saw and experienced abroad. It is as if the pilgrims wanted to remain within their own food habitat, describing what they ate and drank not by paying attention to the differences, but rather the similarities.

Hence, the accounts report on the pilgrims eating bread, cheese, eggs, poultry, meat, and fish, as if these were the same as in the Low Countries. This apparent familiarity with food abroad does not mean, however, that observations and othering processes used in the narratives imply that many pilgrims were not strikingly observant about the differences and local customs in southern Europe and the Middle East. Indeed, they measure quite comfortably differences in religious, economic, military, political, but also cultural, sometimes even ethnic terms, but clearly food was not one of the key ingredients for these othering mechanisms. There is some talk about different kinds of bread (flat and chewy) or about the sweetness of local wines, and noblemen like Bertrandon de la Broquière even mention particular Turkish dishes like *yogurt*. But such observations were astonishingly exceptional. Food is not so much a marker for difference, and the question remains whether this is because food was not that different, or whether like today's mass tourists, encountering food differences was not among the main concerns of these late medieval travelers, and that staying within their own food culture was the main practical goal of late medieval religious travelers.

There is another striking absence in the late medieval travelogues. One of the main features of late medieval gastronomy is its obsession with spices, and above all the fragrant spices coming from southern Asia. Moreover, exactly in the period when most travel accounts to Jerusalem were written in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, a fundamental shift occurred toward the declining importance of eastern spices (with the notable exception of pepper and nutmeg), in particular, as a recent case study on Bruges makes clear, also in the hometowns of the pilgrims themselves. The medieval abundance of and creative assemblages with spices had led to a very particular preference for sharp and sour palates, a preference that would only start to slowly wither away in exactly this period.<sup>61</sup> There is no trace of this, however, in our late medieval travel descriptions. Spices are just not mentioned. Certainly, they appear in the narratives of those pilgrims who also visited Mamluk Egypt. Alexandria was with Venice itself the main hub of the spice trade across the Mediterranean. The only exception is a quantity of nutmeg one of the pilgrims bought in Venice, nutmeg being one of the most popular (but also one of the most expensive) spices around. Paradoxically, the nutmeg makes the reverse journey across the Mediterranean to the Levant. But the nutmeg was not bought to flavor the food, it was used as a medicine for combatting sea sickness.

The absence of spiced food in the narratives, by many scholars considered as the essence of late medieval culinary experience, casts serious doubts about the central position of spices for the culinary customs in this period in the eyes of the urban elites and middle classes of northern Europe. Gastronomy in the eastern Mediterranean was as much influenced by the use of spices as in western Europe, so there is no reason why the pilgrims would leave out this particular feature. Perhaps spices had above all a particularly important role to play in the perception of food in this period, but it did not provide that clear an identity marker for the social position of late medieval people. The flat and chewy bread in the Holy Land or the hard Venetian ship biscuits are much more markers of identifying and branding food regimes. Pilgrims very much stayed within the boundaries of their own food culture, and apparently this did not prove to have been very difficult on the road to and from the Middle East. Only travelers with a noble background seem to demonstrate some interest in local customs. But they record exotic foods almost exclusively in two specific contexts, either as distant observers, or as participants in a particular activity (usually them being invited to dinners by local elites).

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<sup>61</sup> Paul Freedman, *Out of the East. Spices and the Medieval Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 215–25.

The other major change in food dealings in northern Europe in this period, the changes in the material objects necessary for food consumption (tableware, furniture) and the role of table manners and food consumption in constructing social distinction, is more apparent in the travelogues. Food regimes as they are described in the narratives were very different for the various social actors who reported on them. But food was always to some extent related to social status. Both the quality and cost of food and the rituals surrounding preparing and eating it were crucial variables that helped to produce and reproduce social difference. The notion of food regimes is therefore useful to describe differential travel experiences. There were, of course, also very personal preferences and personal choices in describing particular dealings with food that complicate clear-cut social divides. But as a rule, it can be stated firmly that food played only a marginal role in the travel descriptions (and therefore in the travel experiences) of clergymen. They describe foodstuffs and dining practices as bare necessities for surviving the journey. Noblemen are equally reticent when talking about food, but for totally different reasons. The practicalities of travel do not color their accounts. Food only appears in moments of social contact with local dignitaries. Hence, Bertrandon de la Broquière talks in great detail about his reception at the court of the Ottoman sultan, but he does not mention his daily meals, nor is he speaking about getting access to food and drink during the journey, if it is not in the context of describing his own heroic deeds or to indicate his status as a nobleman. However, one can easily imagine the practicalities of food to be the almost exclusive concern of the servants who often accompanied noble travelers. Even lower-ranking noblemen, such as the urban politicians Joos van Ghistele and Georges Lengherand, hardly talk about their own food experiences. Their observations are usually limited to talking about crops in the lands they travel through or to local customs, like the Cairene street food.

Food is clearly a sensitive matter for other groups in society. In particular well-off bourgeois warmed up to talking about it. Their world was not so much geared toward showing distinctive rank and status like noblemen, or toward experiencing devotional austerity like priests or friars; nor was their existence primarily defined by religious experiences or intellectual apprehensions. It is as if consuming food constituted an essential part of their self-image and their class. For craftsmen, like Arent Willemszoon, getting access to food was part of the adventure. Although he must have had some financial means to pay for it, otherwise the expensive journey to Jerusalem would have been impossible for him anyhow, food on their travels (and general comfort for that matter) must have added considerably to the overall travel cost. The Delft barber probably tried to save money on travel comfort, and therefore also on food consumption. But it was

not self-denial as a devotional state of mind that was at stake for them, as it was the case for the clergymen on pilgrimage.

However, for wealthy town-dwellers, that is, for merchants like Jacques Le Saige or Peter De Smet, there was much more at stake. Getting access to good food was part of their mercantile identity inasmuch as mercantile appreciations of having had a good or a bad dinner were at the heart of their observation. Some even went as far as organizing their travel narrative along the rhythm of their lunches and dinners. It is also only the bourgeois who take the mercantile stand of assessing, sometimes even without interruption throughout the narrative, price and quality of the food and service they received. It was good or bad, rich or poor, plenty or insufficient, well prepared or badly cooked. Little attention is paid to food regimes other than their own experience, however. The merchants' gastronomic world had its boundaries, it was limited to their immediate surroundings, and, in contrast to other travelers, they did not dwell that much on general knowledge and assumptions, nor were they inclined to use their gastronomic encounters in status-related settings. It was a very personal world depending on the format of the travelogue, either registered as events in a ledger-like fashion or in a didactic setting of recommendations for future travelers.

Lia Ross

## The Revealing Peregrinations of Margery Kempe

Since its discovery in 1934, *The Book of Margery Kempe* has been the subject of a variety of studies in which her multi-faceted character of bourgeois wife, pilgrim, and mystic is alternately admired as emblem of individualism, spirituality, and even feminism, and vilified as a manifestation of mental illness or hypocrisy.<sup>1</sup> Since her whole adult life seems to have been devoted to obtaining validation of her eccentric mysticism, it is natural that scholars would examine from that same angle her wanderings (which constitute a pervasive theme in her narrative), and her often confrontational encounters with fellow pilgrims and clerical authorities.<sup>2</sup> However, the focus of the present chapter is on the more personal aspects of her travels, those that best reveal the trajectory of her vocation and the evolution of her character through the social interactions that they engendered.

While travels occupy a similar prominent position in both Book I and Book II, the two sections of the work reveal a marked difference in the way the author (or her scribe) approaches the topic. In the first book, where travel-related events

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1 The book seems to have been written between 1436 and 1438. The manuscript is not the original, but a copy made sometimes before 1450. Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe: A New Translation, Contexts, Criticism*, ed. and trans. Lynn Staley. Norton Critical Editions (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), xii, xv. Albrecht Classen supplies an all-encompassing definition of the *Book* as “an autobiographically oriented compendium of mystical visions, dialogues with the Godhead, priests and archbishops, and a variety of lay people.” Albrecht Classen, *The Power of a Woman's Voice in Medieval and Early Modern Literatures: New Approaches to German and European Women Writers and to Violence Against Women in Premodern Times*. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 306. And Kathleen Ashley defines it as an “unusual account of one woman's spiritual pilgrimage through fifteenth-century Europe.” Kathleen Ashley, “Historicizing Margery: *The Book of Margery Kempe* as Social Text,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28:2 (1998): 371–88; here 371. Both authors provide a comprehensive synopsis of recent studies on Margery by category.

2 On this importance of Kempe's travels as a self-containing topic, see Terence N. Bowers, “Margery Kempe as Traveler,” *Studies in Philology* XC VII.1 (2000): 1–28. James P. Helfers criticizes works that discount her travel experiences because of her lack of curiosity about the sites visited. James P. Helfers, “The Mystic as Pilgrim: Margery Kempe and the Tradition of Nonfictional Travel Narrative,” *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association* 13 (1992): 25–45; here 26. On the same topic, see also Albrecht Classen, “Die Mystikerin als peregrina. Margery Kempe: Reisende in corpore – Reisende in spiritu,” *Studies in Spirituality* 5 (1995): 127–45.

encompass almost one half of the eighty-nine chapters, they are an integral component of her spiritual quest, which unfolded in two chronologically successive stages.<sup>3</sup> The first took place a few years following the severe postpartum crisis (precipitated by an unnamed and unconfessed sin) that had ended with her conversion.<sup>4</sup> During this phase she undertook a series of short excursions to localities relatively close to her native Lynn. They were essentially educational missions, with the specific purpose of meeting well-known religious figures – monks, bishops, and anchorites – to discuss her visions and obtain assurance both of their orthodoxy and also of the special status that she hoped they would confer upon her.<sup>5</sup> Being, by her own avowal, illiterate, Margery lacked the means to correspond with them, hence the necessity of visits in person (curiously enough, given her interest in religious texts, she remained all her life a talker and a seer, never a reader). Later in life she was able to recruit two scribes in succession to record her memoirs (apparently only the second being a literate priest), but until her credentials were established, she could count on no intermediaries.<sup>6</sup> During these early peregrinations she also visited local shrines, where she sheds tears of contrition, a preview of a theme that will be much more extensively developed in conjunction with future journeys. But the dominant topic of this set of travels is her effort to receive acceptance, both from her husband and from clerical authorities, of her need to emancipate herself from marital life and its associated duties.

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3 Travels within England are the major topic of Book I, chapters 9 through 18 and again 46 through 55, while the pilgrimages abroad fill the greatest portion of chapters 26 through 45.

4 Margery mentions (but does not describe) her sin at the very opening of Book I: she had fallen gravely ill after giving birth to her first child and had tried to unburden her conscience to face death, but had been rebuffed by her confessor. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 6–7.

5 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 18–33. Clarissa Atkinson states that she “was not a pilgrim so much as a novice learning her vocation. She went in search of living people, authorities in the world she was entering, rather than shrines and relics.” Clarissa W. Atkinson, *Mystic and Pilgrim: the Book and the World of Margery Kempe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 54. Christopher Roman concurs: “Part of establishing legitimacy for women mystics was finding some spiritual authority to validate their visions.” Christopher Roman, “Margery Kempe and Italy: Sacred Space and the Community in Her Soul,” *Travels and Travelogues in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jean-François Kosta-Théfaine. AMS Studies in the Middle Ages, 28 (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 2009), 157–88; here 166.

6 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 105–06. Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 79 states that women of the mercantile class were in general better educated than Margery, and that her illiteracy is “somewhat surprising.” About her scribes, see Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 5–6, 157–61; and Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 29–30.

Significantly, then, during this phase she was regularly accompanied by her husband John Kempe, with whom she entertained lively dialogues on the subject of her sought-after chastity.<sup>7</sup>

The high point of her travels occurred in the next phase, when she reached her forties, and felt strong enough to assert her will on her husband and demand the independence of a true pilgrimage.<sup>8</sup> It has also been suggested that the death of her father in 1413 was a liberating factor in the choice of timing, both financially and psychologically.<sup>9</sup> The first and longer journey, which apparently started in the fall of the same year, took her first to Constance and Venice and from there by ship to Jerusalem, where she sojourned about three weeks. This was by necessity an organized, escorted group tour, with well-regulated excursions to pre-chosen sites and few occasions for impromptu side trips (see Fig. 1).<sup>10</sup> Once back in Venice, a separate leg of the voyage took the group to Rome by way of Assisi. She remained in Rome through the winter of 1414, where she was formally bonded in a mystical marriage to the Godhead on the footsteps of her model, the “non-cloistered, engaged mystic” Saint Birgitta of Sweden.<sup>11</sup>

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7 The quest for a chaste marriage met with mixed results: for example, she obtained only an ambiguous reply from the bishop of Lincoln. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 25–27. An example of lively dialogue in which John Kempe argued against her request of living in chastity is in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 18–20. Roman, “Margery Kempe and Italy” (see note 5), 168, affirms that in the country where both were known, her husband provided both validation and protection. However, he tended to disappear into the background at critical moments: for example once he left her to fend for herself, apparently embarrassed by her loud crying. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 21.

8 “In order to embark on a pilgrimage, Kempe must seek the approval of her husband” and “gain control over her own bodily space.” Roman, “Margery Kempe and Italy” (see note 5), 167. As for her age at the time, Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 14; she places her putative date of birth in (circa) 1373.

9 Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 17 (also, note no. 4, 17).

10 She mentions a lone hike up “Mount Quarentyne” led by a “comely” Saracen. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 54. The whole pilgrimage is narrated in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 44–74 (chapters 26 through 42). For the duration of her stay in Jerusalem, see Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 53. The centrality of the Jerusalem pilgrimage, and its transformational effects upon Margery, is discussed in Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, “The Jerusalem Pilgrimage: The Centre of the Structure of the *Book of Margery Kempe*,” *English Studies* 86.3 (2005): 193–205; here 193.

11 Bowers, “Margery Kempe as Traveler” (see note 2), 16 and Yoshikawa, “The Jerusalem Pilgrimage” (see note 10), 198. The mystical marriage is discussed by Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 63–64. She returned to England after Easter. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 73–74.



**Fig. 1:** Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Rome 1413–1414 via Constance and Venice, © Lia Ross.

**Note:** The current and following itineraries are my creation, drawn on a background map of medieval Europe (without labels) at <https://www.purposegames.com/images/games/background/101/101075.gif> (last accessed on August 11, 2017).

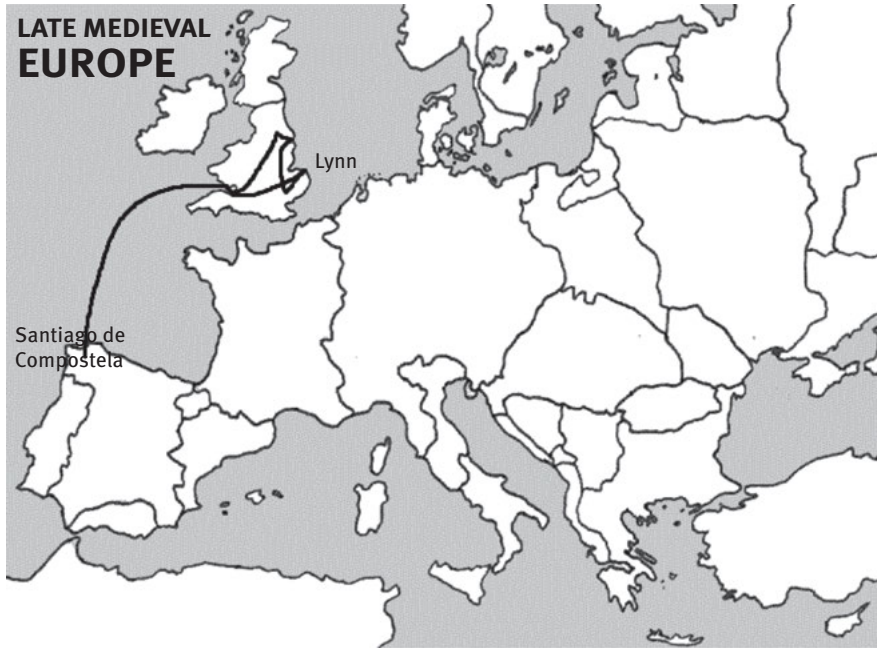
The Roman visit yielded two contrasting personal outcomes for Margery. On the one hand, she suffered a renewal of long-standing conflicts with fellow pilgrims, and possibly the rise of a new one (thinly veiled under routine penitential instructions) with her German confessor.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the length of the stay, and periodic banishments from her travel group, forced Margery into closer contact with local residents of the now derelict former see of Western power, and gave her time to appreciate their resigned poverty and their kindness.<sup>13</sup> The second pilgrimage, to Saint James of Compostela, took place soon afterwards, in

<sup>12</sup> Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 59, 62. This voyage and related trouble with other pilgrims is usually the most discussed by modern scholars. For example, Bowers, “Margery Kempe as Traveler” (see note 2), 19, remarks that her fellow pilgrims “seem unreasonable and vindictive” toward her.

<sup>13</sup> Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 68–69. Bowers, “Margery Kempe as Traveler” (see note 2), 22, emphasizes her acceptance at all levels of Roman society, where she was perceived as “societal good” and “harmonizing force.”



the summer of 1417, lasted a little over a month between sailing from and back to Bristol and sojourn at the sanctuary, but is not described in the *Book*, except for her brief comment of having derived great comfort, “bothyn bodily and gostly” (“both bodily and ghostly”) from the visit (see Fig. 2).<sup>14</sup>



**Fig. 2:** Pilgrimage to Compostela (1417) and return from Bristol to Lynn with intermediary stops, © Lia Ross.

These two trips brought back to England a buoyant, feisty, self-assured Margery, seemingly elated by the very fact of having survived the dangers of the journeys, and whose newly-acquired emancipation was asserted by a tangible reluctance to return to the domestic setting.<sup>15</sup> In fact, she did not hurry home, but embarked on a leisurely progress from Bristol toward Lynn punctuated by visits to shrines and

<sup>14</sup> *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Barry A. Windeatt. Longman Annotated Texts (Harlow, England, London, and New York: Longman, 2000), 227. Before sailing, she had to wait an additional six weeks in Bristol for a ship. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 78–81.

<sup>15</sup> For her relief and pride in overcoming the dangers of travel, cf. II Corinthians, 11:26: “In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.”

acquaintances in Hailes, Leicester, York, Bridlington, Hull, Hessle, and Lincoln, and by testy encounters with authorities both laic and clerical.<sup>16</sup>

Fresh from the most prestigious pilgrimages of the Middle Ages, and reassured about her personal salvation, now Margery wears exclusively white clothes and a ring engraved with “Jhesus est amor meus,” and she feels free to deliver – if not sermons from pulpits – certainly moral lectures to whomever she encounters, and to argue, meekly (in her words) but quite firmly with bishops and servants of baronial houses.<sup>17</sup> Uplifted by recent memories of places touched directly by Christ, which bring to her mind evermore vivid images of the Passion, she announces her presence in public places with boisterous crying, accompanied by loud screams and violent thrashing on the ground that many eyewitnesses mistake for seizures or demonic possession.<sup>18</sup> At every stopover of the journey a similar scenario unfolds: she is faced with new tribulations in the form of arrest, or peremptory summons by the authorities to respond to various charges – from Lollardy to counseling a respectable lady to abandon her husband – or even insults by angry mobs and threats of execution.<sup>19</sup> But each crisis ends in yet another triumph, as she cleverly defends herself and turns the tables on her persecutors with her simple logic backed by divine inspiration.<sup>20</sup> The successful progress culminates with her haranguing an audience of sympathetic women from the window of the room where she is confined, and a verbal victory over an exasperated archbishop of York, whom she reduces to haggling with a servant for the price to escort her away from his diocese.<sup>21</sup> As confirmed by endless “dalyawns” (dalliance) with the Godhead, Margery seems to have come to relish an earthly

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**16** The adventurous progress from Bristol to Lynn is described in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 81–100 (chapters 45 through 55).

**17** Margery makes this distinction explicitly (she was not “preaching”) in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 93, to protect herself from charges of Lollardy. Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 101, notices her “direct and straightforward language” toward priests and bishops. The ring (made in England) and the white clothes (made in Rome) are mentioned in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 57–58.

**18** This pattern had started while in Jerusalem. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 50–51. For reaction back in England, see Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 77.

**19** Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 82–83, 93. She was accused by an assistant to the archbishop of York of having advised Lady Greystoke, daughter of Lady Westmoreland, to abandon her husband (which Margery denied). Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 98 (also note no. 4, 98). For comments on her alleged Lollardy, see Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 103–08.

**20** Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 100. Classen, *The Power of a Woman's Voice* (see note 1), 296, remarks: “Margery impressively proves to be a bold, skillful, and sharp-witted speaker.”

**21** The two episodes are in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 95–96.

life of conflict and tribulations as token of the special love that Christ bestows upon her, and as a vehicle for paradise in the next.<sup>22</sup>

This euphoric phase of travels ends abruptly at chapter fifty-five, with her return to Lynn in the company of her husband.<sup>23</sup> The last third of Book I is a litany of disappointments: during sixteen-odd stationary years “sche suffryd meche despite, meche reprefe, many a scorne, many a slawndyr, many a bannyng, and many a cursyng” (“she suffered much despite, much reproof, many a scorn, many a slander, many a banning, and many a cursing”).<sup>24</sup> She recalls a long bout of illness, humiliations in the local church of Saint Margaret, and a momentary lapse of faith followed by demonic thoughts invading her mind against her will.<sup>25</sup> Then she runs into the most serious conflict with a preacher who refuses her attendance to sermons unless she control her crying, and she has a long conversation with God about exacting revenge on her detractor.<sup>26</sup> To friends who advise her to leave town to avoid further troubles, she answers darkly that she deserves punishment by remaining in the very city where she had first sinned and trespassed against God.<sup>27</sup> This is the second explicit mention of her past sin, and once again it surfaces at a low point in her life.

As she reached her fifties, she suffered additional frustrations: once more, as when she had been a full-time mother, she was forced into a reluctant domesticity, this time to nurse her husband, who had fallen from a stairway severely injuring his head, an unfortunate event which provoked criticism from the neighbors for her apparent negligence. She complied half-heartedly, and only after God’s reassurance that this act of charity would be as appreciated as much as her tearful prayers and meditations.<sup>28</sup> Still, more misfortune awaited her. After years of care,

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22 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 88, 134. An additional reason is given by Bowers, “Margery Kempe as Traveler” (see note 2), 18: “Suffering is central to the Jerusalem pilgrimage because by enduring hardship the pilgrim reenacts Christ’s tribulations and performs an act of personal redemption” and Helfers, “The Mystic as Pilgrim” (see note 2), 33: “In fact [...] the most holy of the chosen must suffer the most hardship, and perhaps even martyrdom, for the cause of Christ.”

23 After the first pilgrimage and a short detour, she was met in Norwich by her husband. A second detour to London (to obtain a letter from the new archbishop of Canterbury) in the company of her husband occurs before a final return to Lynn (1417). Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 76, 101.

24 Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 271, trans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 101. She adds that a man even threw a bowl of water on her head.

25 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 101–02, 106–07.

26 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 109–17.

27 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 114.

28 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 131–32. According to Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 18, she returned to live with her husband around 1431.

John Kempe became senile and incontinent, and Margery had to spend even more time in cleaning after him and less in meditations. With her own health limiting travel to a short visit to a convent in Denney, her principal consolation rested in long flights of imagination, in which she witnessed the Passion of Christ and its aftermath in grim details, and fancied herself serving as handmaid and counselor to the grieving Virgin.<sup>29</sup>

Travel suddenly resurfaces in Book II. In ten short chapters, this section chronicles the events surrounding what was perhaps Margery's last peregrination, to the unlikely destination of Prussia, in the course of which her visions assume a subordinate role (see Fig. 3). The trip, which took place between 1433 and 1434, is the most unusual one, almost in a category of its own, and – perhaps for this very reason – the most neglected by modern scholars.<sup>30</sup> It deserves special attention, however, because it raises a whole new set of interpretative challenges and opportunities concerning Margery as traveler. Here the priestly scribe is able to compose the text, and not just rewrite and edit prior material.<sup>31</sup> The result is a more coherent narrative, chronologically structured around factual details, the product of the literary skills of the transcriber, and also the more vivid recollection of recent events by the protagonist.

It opens with a rare reference to the author's family. A wayward son, the only one mentioned out of her fourteen children, had eventually reformed his ways,

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**29** Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 132, 137–44. Her trip to visit the Franciscan Minors' house in Denney is in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 147–48.

**30** Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 18, 28–29. This last trip is hardly mentioned in most critical works, except for her visits to Wilsnack and Aachen, which are usually lumped together with her earlier travels under the category of pilgrimages. It is useful to notice, however, that Margery makes only one brief mention of her visit to the "Precious Blood" of Wilsnack. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 171. By that time the bleeding hosts of Wilsnack were "highly disputed" and only a decade later denounced as a fraud by the theologian Heinrich Tocke. Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Blood of Christ in the Later Middle Ages," *Church History* 71.4 (2002): 685–714; here 693, 697. Helfers, "The Mystic as Pilgrim" (see note 2), 27, states that "Margery's narrative actually bridges a gap between the medieval allegorical tradition of pilgrimage narratives and the newer, humanist, curiosity-centered tradition of the Renaissance." However, he focuses on the pilgrimages of Book I.

**31** Book I opens the last paragraph with the words "Her endith this tretys" ("Here ends this treatise") while Book II opens the second paragraph with the words "And first her is a notabyll mater, the whiche is not wretyn in the forscyd tretys" ("And first here is a notable matter, which is not written in the foresaid treatise"). Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 384–85, trans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 160–61. According to Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 30, Book II, which was started in 1438 after completion of the re-writing of Book I, "seems rather an afterthought" due to its brevity.

married and settled in Prussia, where the couple had a daughter.<sup>32</sup> When Margery was approaching sixty, this son came for a visit accompanied by his German wife; but no sooner did he arrive in Lynn than he fell ill, and within a month was dead. Shortly afterwards John Kempe also died, leaving an aged Margery apparently alone with her daughter-in-law for a year and a half.<sup>33</sup> At this point Margery could have opted to become a nun or a recluse, and seal her religious vocation with a socially and canonically accepted gesture, but she did nothing of the sort.<sup>34</sup> As the daughter-in-law wished to return home, where she had left her child in the care of friends, Margery went with her to her long-time confessor to obtain permission to accompany the young woman, but he only allowed her to go as far as Ipswich to see the daughter-in-law embarked on a German ship among compatriots, including (apparently) a man who had come explicitly to accompany her home. Margery seemed to comply, but at this point she claims that God commanded her to sail for the continent with the daughter-in-law, despite her advanced age, a foot injury from which she was not fully recovered, and the young lady's ostensible wish to travel without her (see Fig. 3).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> She mentions giving birth to fourteen children during an interrogation by the mayor of Leicester. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 85. It seems that Margery had tried unsuccessfully to force this son away from business activities and toward monasticism or at least toward avoiding women until married. But he had fallen into “the synne of lechery” (“the sin of lechery”) and, in consequence, been disfigured by “whelys and bloberys” (“whelks and splotches”) (syphilis?). Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 386, trans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 161.

<sup>33</sup> Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 162–64. The son had previously visited home alone and undertaken his own pilgrimage to Rome, while the initiative for the present visit seems to have come from his German wife. After a failed attempt at sailing for England, the parents left the child in Prussia with friends and traveled mainly by land. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 163 and Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 390. Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 18 states that the couple came to visit with their child, but the latter is never mentioned again.

<sup>34</sup> Apparently, not too many widows chose a cloistered life, but their impact on the community was considerable. Joel T. Rosenthal, “Fifteen-Century Widows and Widowhood: Bereavement, Reintegration, and Life Choices,” *Wife and Widow in Medieval England*, ed. Sue Sheridan Walker. Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Civilization, Marvin B. Becker General Editor (1993; Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 33–58; here 44–45.

<sup>35</sup> Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 164–66. Margery states that she had misgivings about going, but that God was insistent (without offering a reason). She underwent two local pilgrimages, to Walsingham and Norwich, accompanied by a hermit, to obtain validation for this plan, and conveyed her surprise at God's command to the hermit, who remained unconvinced. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 165–66. Her confessor since “at least 1413” was Master Robert Spryngolde. Anthony Goodman suggests that his testy refusal to allow Margery to travel was motivated by solicitude for her old age and foot injury. Anthony

After a harrowing voyage through the North and Baltic Seas, with a stopover in Norway during Easter, the passengers land in Danzig (Gdansk), where the daughter-in-law quickly exits the scene. Now Margery is left without a mission, in a land close to eight hundred miles from the English holding of Calais, and amidst a “cold war” between England and the Hanseatic League.<sup>36</sup> Following a stay of five or six weeks in Danzig (Gdansk), where she had at first received a warm welcome, she is commanded by God to return home, and at this point she embarks on a long, arduous, extremely uncomfortable, and at times dangerous trek to reach Calais, and from there take a ship to Dover.<sup>37</sup> The rest of Book II is a travelogue describing the “picaresque adventures” of her return journey, and ends abruptly with her arrival to Lynn and reconciliation with her confessor.<sup>38</sup>

The meticulous but terse account leaves the reader struggling with some puzzling inconsistencies. First, why did the elderly Margery embark on this adventure, considering that she had (by her own admission) a veritable phobia of choppy seas and that she knew that her presence at this time was not necessary or welcome?<sup>39</sup> One cannot dismiss the impression that the destination (Prussia) was less important than the urge to leave home once again, perhaps to experience her ecstatic visions on a new stage away from domestic confines, or at least the confines of the city where she was best known and had suffered recent disappointments and

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Goodman, *Margery Kempe and her World* (London and New York: Longman, 2002), 90. For the exploration of the northern parts of Europe by medieval travelers, see the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

**36** Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 167–68; Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), note no. 18, 57. Later, on her way to Aachen, Margery relates verbal aggression against her by some German priests. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 172.

**37** Margery states that she was too afraid of returning by sea, hence the decision to travel by land (except for a short tract to Stralsund). A merchant from Lynn obtained for her a travel permit through lands controlled by the Teutonic Knights. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 168–69.

**38** The term is by Staley in her study, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), xv. Travelogues for that area of Europe are extremely rare in medieval literature. See the chapter “Traveling to/ in the North in the Middle Ages: The World of Northern Europe in Medieval and Early Modern Travel Narratives” by Albrecht Classen in the present volume, who also includes comments on Kempe. After her return from Germany she appears to have settled in her town to dictate the final version of her *Book*, which was made public only for its devotional portions and for a limited time. Bowers, “Margery Kempe as Traveler” (see note 2), note no. 63, 27. There is one further mention of her in 1438, when she joined the Guild of the Holy Trinity, to which her own father had belonged, and modern scholars believe that she died shortly afterwards, in her mid- or late-sixties. Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 18, 76.

**39** For her terror of stormy seas, see Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 75, 167, 169. See also the remarks by the fifteenth-century German poet Michel Beheim, as discussed by Albrecht Classen in his contribution to this volume.



**Fig. 3:** Margery's trip to Danzig (Gdansk) by ship and return by land (from Stralsund). The actual itinerary from Aachen to Calais is not described in the *Book* and can only be inferred. Total distance traveled by land: around 1110 kilometers or 690 miles © Lia Ross.

griefs. These are entirely valid reasons, but also quite personal and not necessarily altruistic, and of dubious relevance in a religious treatise.<sup>40</sup> Margery's attempt to cast her sudden inspiration in a domestic light (acting as chaperone for the daughter-in-law) is belied by the latter's resistance to being escorted. Further, unlike most previous trips, for which the spiritual intent was foremost, the present one offers no obvious justification outside accompanying the unwilling young woman, and has only incidental resemblance to a pilgrimage. In particular, it lacks the relevance of pardon as a specific goal, and it includes too many details devoid of religious significance (which will be discussed shortly), even if the narrator tends to surround with a miraculous aura every new encounter with

<sup>40</sup> Margery reports (or imagines?) opinions in Lynn at her sudden departure: some saw it as an act of foolish "love" or "great charity" toward her daughter-in-law. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 166. Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 53, 57, states that Margery hated sea travel and was not interested in foreign places for themselves, but rather as vehicles "to extend her experience of the sacred."

potential cohorts.<sup>41</sup> Most significantly, Margery did stop at known holy sites such as Wilsnack and Aachen on her southwesterly journey, but those popular destinations were not chosen by her, but apparently by a casual travel companion. In fact, it seems that a land-based return trip was not even planned by Margery, until she became terrified of venturing once again on high seas after the recent rough experience. As for the original destination (Danzig/Gdansk), the fact that this was the very city where Dorothea of Montau had resided seems not altogether relevant, as Margery does not manifest any interest in the German mystic.<sup>42</sup>

The motives of other players are also perplexing. For example, why did her confessor burden a woman bereft of family, and an experienced traveler besides, with what appears to be a petty limitation of her freedom? One may only attempt a reasonable guess. Given that the priest was also confessor to the daughter-in-law, he may have been aware of the latter's dislike of her mother-in-law, and

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**41** Helfers, "The Mystic as Pilgrim" (see note 2), 27–28, defines the ideal pilgrimage as "a religious journey, a quest for pardon or blessing through the disciplines of devotion and veneration," and affirms that after the eleventh century its main goal was to obtain pardon. This certainly fits Margery's pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Rome, Saint James, and some (but not all) travels within England. Likewise, the portions of her *Book* dealing with those pilgrimages could fit the narrative category of pilgrimage literature (the other two being guides and logs) given by Helfers, "The Mystic as Pilgrim" (see note 2), 29, which record the pilgrim's own experience but focus on the "symbolic importance of specific shrines." He adds: "Rarely do pilgrimage narrators acknowledge aspects of the pilgrim's journey that do not have spiritual significance. Instead they focus on providential deliverances or happenings, holy thoughts or conversations, and persecutions." Helfers, "The Mystic as Pilgrim" (see note 2), 33. Margery's last voyage contains accounts of "providential deliverance," but is ambiguous on the other two components (for example, most "holy conversations" concern her own physical safety).

**42** A man proposed to her the pilgrimage to Wilsnack while she was praying in a church in Danzig (Gdansk). The meeting is described tersely in the *Book*: "[a] man [...] askyd yf sche wolde gon on pilgrimage [...] to a place clepyd Wilsnak [...]" Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 399. She agreed if she could be assured of companionship all the way to England, and consented only to a short sea trip along the coast as far as Stralsund (during which she feared the high winds). The two then proceeded toward Aachen with another group, but at this point she was apparently only a follower. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 169–71. As for Dorothea of Montau, Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 179–80, affirms that Dorothea, who lived in Danzig (Gdansk) during her married life and after 1390 became a recluse attached to the cathedral at Marienwerder, was the closest mystic to Margery in "time, place, and spirit." But nothing suggests that Margery's trips to Danzig (Gdansk) or Aachen were pilgrimages on her footsteps. For an inclusive study on the German mystic, see Albrecht Classen, "Wounding the Body and Freeing the Spirit. Dorothea von Montau's Bloody Quest for Christ, a Late-Medieval Phenomenon of the Extraordinary Kind," *Wounds and Wound Repair in Medieval Culture*, ed. Larissa Tracy and Kelly DeVries. Explorations in Medieval Culture, 1 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 417–47.



attempted to use his authority to separate the two women.<sup>43</sup> If this is the case, the situation bears a curious resemblance to an earlier one, during Margery's pilgrimage to Jerusalem, when her maid abandoned her to serve the group of English pilgrims who had ostracized her mistress.<sup>44</sup> And yet, despite Margery's indignation at the ingratitude of both young women, neither one seems to be a bad person. In the present instance, the young widow's wish to be left alone seems reasonable, after having endured a year and a half of living, in such sad circumstances, under the same roof with a mother-in-law who had hitherto been a stranger. While the maid, once she had found employment in the hospice for English pilgrims in Rome, showed herself generous with wine, food, and even money toward her former employer, but would not get back under her authority at any price.<sup>45</sup> To go even further back to Margery's youthful, "greedy" stage, she had then attempted to start commercial activities of her own, brewing and milling, until the hired help had left her.<sup>46</sup> Even in absence of definitive evidence, it seems reasonable to deduce that people in position of submission may have wanted to be free from her (perhaps) overbearing personality.

Another puzzling element of this journey is a new emphasis on solvency, a departure from Book I, where money seems to have come to or left the narrator in a haphazard way.<sup>47</sup> Now every payment for company or lodging is duly recorded, incidentally revealing that Margery had adequate funds for the trip. This, in turn, implies some planning and foresight, which contradicts the early statement that she had acted on impulse under divine guidance, and in fact, that she had even argued with Jesus "in her mind" that she had insufficient money for a long trip.<sup>48</sup> A further departure from Book I is a new stress on her own vulnerability: throughout the land trip she was tormented by fears of assaults on her chastity, a concern

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<sup>43</sup> Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 164. Here the author (or scribe) says that the German woman needed to return home to please her family and friends who had requested her return, and emphasizes the polite terms in which she had begged leave from Margery.

<sup>44</sup> Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 46–47, 49.

<sup>45</sup> Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 69. The hospice of Saint Thomas of Canterbury is first mentioned in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 59. Margery was later expelled from it (because of "slander" against her) and then readmitted.

<sup>46</sup> Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 9.

<sup>47</sup> For example, in Rome she gave away all her gold and had to beg for food until a priest came from England with funds for her return trip. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 67–68, 70.

<sup>48</sup> Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 165. She mentions paying for companionship in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 169, 174, 176, 177 and for lodging in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 173, 175. For a discussion of Margery's "economic autonomy," see David Aers, *Community, Gender, and Individual Identity: English Writing, 1360–1430* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 77–78.

brought up with much less urgency during early pilgrimages, but now uttered in almost frantic terms.<sup>49</sup> There are several possible explanations for this: the feebleness of advanced age; the lack of recent experience with long-distance travel; the lawlessness of some of the lands to be crossed; and the lack of a reliable company of fellow travelers. However, when considering the two facts together – carrying money and being vulnerable – a more realistic fear would have been that of being robbed (and in fact, some of her companions did fall victim to robbers, with serious consequences).<sup>50</sup> Could it be that this less-than-inspiring sentiment may have been replaced (perhaps at the instigation of the scribe) with one more fitting the hagiographical tone of the work? As an aside, it is fair to say that, even given the precarious conditions of the last journey, she reached home having been neither assaulted nor robbed, and in fact many of her casual acquaintances had behaved with remarkable correctness and even touching concern toward her.<sup>51</sup>

More generally, what contribution did this trip make to the thematic content of the work to justify its central role in the whole second section of the *Book*? While the contemplation of the Sacred Blood in Wilsnack and of the cloth relics in Aachen rewarded Margery with the desired solace, this last enterprise seems peculiarly short of occasions for spiritual uplifting, and quite disastrous in other respects. Here we find an oddly diminished Margery, terrified of being abandoned, painfully “running and leaping” to keep up with a variety of fearful, preoccupied companions, anxious to reach their own destination and scarcely attentive to her needs. Bad planning and lack of reliable guides even forced her at one time to join a group of lice-infested itinerant beggars, and another time to sleep on “an hep of

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<sup>49</sup> In a hostel she begged the “good wife of the house” to let her sleep with two maids, but still she could not fall asleep for fear of defilement. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 172. Later on, she expresses her fears in these terms: “And on nyghtys had sche most dreed [...] for sche was evyr aferd to a be ravischyd er defilyd. Sche durst trustyn on no man; whedir sche had cawse er non, sche was evyr aferd. Sche durst ful evyl slepy n any nyth, for sche wend men wolde a defilyd hir” (“And on nights had she most dread [...] for she was ever afraid to have been ravished or defiled. She dared trust on no man, whether she had cause or no; she was ever afraid. She dared hardly sleep any night, for she thought men would have defiled her”). Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 412, trans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 175. She mentions the same fear, but with less intensity, in Book I, when she was first abandoned by her maid and had only a man, William Weaver, as guide to Bologna, and then again in Leicester. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 47–48, 82–83. The fear was not altogether unfounded. Apparently, the promise of plenary indulgence was interpreted by some pilgrims as license for displays of immoral behavior. Helfers, “The Mystic as Pilgrim” (see note 2), 43.

<sup>50</sup> Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 174. Also, one of her friar companions advised moving out of a “perilous” town. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 175.

<sup>51</sup> For example, Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 172, 173, 174, 176.

brakys” (“a heap of ferns”) in a humble house.<sup>52</sup> She was repeatedly isolated and rendered irrelevant, although in a less deliberate way than in earlier pilgrimages. In Book I she usually associates public humiliations and hostility with her lusty tears and cries and her habit of talking incessantly about God, a motive which confers upon her misery a certain aura of martyrdom.<sup>53</sup> In the last travelogue, however, this correlation is only mentioned once, while her roaring and convulsive thrashing appear to have given way to a more subdued weeping, and only within specific settings.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps the very fact that this last journey “was a much more dismal and disorderly affair than her great pilgrimages,” and wrought with disappointments, may have been the deciding factor in its inclusion in the *Book*, where it adds to the list of tribulations that afflicted the author.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, the drama that surrounds her relations with travel companions and acquaintances shows little change from Book I. One episode, in particular, is a striking example. She had met in Aachen a “worshipful” widow from London on pilgrimage with her retinue, and Margery had tried to attach herself to the group, perhaps in search of safety and better lodging, or to enhance vicariously her own status. After treating Margery graciously and inviting her to dinner, however, the lady had hastily departed on the appointed day, leaving her behind.<sup>56</sup> Now a disappointed Margery had no choice but to join various travelers moving in the same direction, on foot or by wagon, or hire individual guides. She finally caught up with the lady, but the latter told her curtly that her company

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52 Her first guide hurries ahead from Stralsund to Wilsnack, afraid of robbers and irked by her crying. When he and his new group abandon her, she joins a band of beggars. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 170–73. From Aachen, she “ran and leapt” after hurried travelers until she fell behind and had to join a group traveling by wagon. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 174. She slept on rough ferns in a humble private home. Windeatt, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 411 and Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 175.

53 This behavior had caused most of her troubles during the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Rome. For example, her companions cut her gown short to make her look like a fool and excluded her from conversation at mealtimes. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 44–49.

54 She mentions the transition while still in Lynn. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 152. In Aachen she is explicitly rebuked by her companions for weeping aloud while contemplating a relic. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 171–72. But Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 63, remarks that there is no mention of her convulsive cries in Book II.

55 Atkinson, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 56. A new “tribulation,” not included in previous accounts, concerns the difficult terrain of “dep sandys, hillys, and valeys” (“deep sands, hills, and valleys”) close to Calais. Windeatt, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 412, trans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 175. To my knowledge, this is the only observation relative to the landscape that features in the *Book*.

56 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 173.

was not welcome.<sup>57</sup> Further, once Margery finally reached Calais, she tried to find out on which ship the lady and the rest of the group had embarked, but nobody would give her the information (while otherwise treating her with courtesy). She finally found the right ship, but no sooner had she come on board that the group left stealthily for a different one. Margery discovered the ruse, abandoned her luggage on the first ship, and embarked on the other to join the lady's group.<sup>58</sup> As usual, no reason for the actions of either party is offered, but it seems obvious that these people – and especially the unnamed lady – were most anxious to avoid Margery's company, even if the narrator here does not dwell on her unwelcome habit of preaching at mealtimes, or of scolding people for swearing.<sup>59</sup> Given the hurried circumstances, it is also unlikely that any of these travelers could have been made aware of Margery's reputation in Lynn. A more credible hypothesis, then, is that she had somehow offended the lady and her entourage with words or deeds. It is quite amazing that she would go to such extents to be part of an unwilling group and for such a short crossing, during which she was as safe as the other passengers even without an escort. Perhaps we should read this passage as a reference to perceived, rather than real, space: the fear of yet another sea voyage could have magnified the distance and risk in her mind, while upon leaving Danzig (Gdansk) the prospect of a land voyage across Europe had not seemed too daunting to her, given her self-confidence in walking on solid ground. Or perhaps she was reluctant to return among her compatriots alone and in reduced conditions. Whatever the reason, her insensitivity to the reaction of other travelers is quite puzzling.

The weary traveler met with more grief upon reaching London, where an old rumor that she had once refused to eat humble herring in favor of tasty pike resurfaced among social circles. Given the pettiness of the gossip, it is remarkable that she dedicates the best part of a chapter to reporting and refuting the charges.<sup>60</sup>

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57 "What wenyst thu for to gon wyth me? Nay, I do the wel to wetyn I wyl not medelyn wyth the" ("What think you to go with me? Nay, I do you well to know I will not meddle with you"). Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 410, trans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 175. Note the similarity between this situation (chasing after reluctant company) and a previous episode in Book I, when she was abandoned by her group of pilgrims only to meet them in Bologna. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 48.

58 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 176.

59 This is abundantly documented in Book I. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 44, 54, 74, 93, 117. The insistence of her companions on proper behavior at mealtimes corroborates the importance of food as status symbol for bourgeois pilgrims of the period. For details, see the contribution to the present volume by Peter Stabel and Inneke Baatsen.

60 She dedicates the greater part of Chapter 9 to this gossip. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 177–78.

Once again, as in other situations of Book I, the reader is faced with what her contemporaries labeled “hypocrisy” and some modern critics have identified as dissonance between her outward behavior and her idealized view of self.<sup>61</sup> In her rapturous visions she was not only a witness, but an active participant to events in the life of the Holy Family, and always in an ancillary position, whether to help Saint Anne deliver the Virgin or Mary in swaddling the infant Jesus, or to restore the bereaved mother after the Crucifixion.<sup>62</sup> But in real life she did not seem too eager to serve others, preferring a life of contemplation but outside the rigid rules of monasticism.<sup>63</sup> Apart from tears, prayers, and the occasional foretelling (received with mixed reactions), the only concrete aid that she records having given of her own free will is counseling a woman suffering of post-partum depression and comforting sea-sick passengers on the last crossing to Dover.<sup>64</sup>

The hostility that follows her in London is significant as it shows the re-emergence of old grudges, a theme that she underlines (perhaps unwittingly) when she affirms repeatedly that she enjoyed friendly reception only from strangers, a familiar pattern from the time of early pilgrimages, when she was humiliated by fellow countrymen but rescued by sympathetic foreigners, at least until linguistic barriers were overcome.<sup>65</sup> While in London, she did rekindle a

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61 See, for example, Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 12, 61, 114. Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 14, affirms that “her personality remains troublesome; she had aspirations to holiness, reported special favors from God, yet does not seem very ‘saintly’ in character or disposition [...] Her interactions with her Church and community were various and sometimes troubled, and her spiritual experience strikes some critics as ‘extreme’ or egotistical.”

62 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 15, 142.

63 Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 50, states that her religion “was not one of works-righteousness; good deeds and pious practices were subordinated to contemplation and to love of God.” And Roman, “Margery Kempe and Italy” (see note 5), 163, concurs that “[t]he contemplative life was ultimately Kempe’s goal.”

64 Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 176. Mention of her compassionate weeping, special “insights,” calming a woman in post-partum depression, her own experience with the same condition, and a prophecy ill-received are found respectively in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 117, 41–43, 126, 130–31, 6–7, 34–35. On the practical side, she did care for a poor old woman in Rome for six weeks, but this task was a penance assigned to her by her German confessor. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 62.

65 For example, she met with sympathy among Saracens and friars in Jerusalem, and among Romans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 55, 57, 68. And on this last trip she mentions the generous reception by strangers in Calais, but those who knew her previously only “spokyn fayr to hir and yovyn goodly language” (“spoke fairly to her and gave her kindly language”) but no help. Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 413, trans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 176. For a discussion of how Margery approached linguistic barriers, see Classen, *The Power of a Woman’s Voice* (see note 1), 294. For a more general discussion on the topic of language barriers and the existence of foreign language skills, see

spark of the old fire as she angrily attacked “swearars, bannars, lyars and swech other viciows pepil” (“swearers, cursers, liars and such other vicious people”) but then she accepted being chased by priests from church to church for her loud sobbing, to avoid being “tediows onto hem” (“tedious unto them”).<sup>66</sup> A further exchange with a stranger is even more revealing of her state of mind upon returning to English soil. Her last stop before Lynn was a Carthusian monastery in Shene (Richmond), where she was surprised by a devout young man while praying with copious tears. To his questioning the reason for such weeping she replied, significantly, that hers are tears of contrition, for “hir gret unke[n]dnes ayens hir maker [...] and the gret abhominacyon that sche had of hir synnys” (“her great unkindness against her maker and [...] the great abomination that she had for her sins”). Only as an afterthought did she add that her sobbing was also a gift from her redeemer that turns into “joy and blisse” (“joy and bliss”).<sup>67</sup> Toward the end of her life Margery has completed a full circle, returning to the place from where she had started her peregrinations many years before, and still tormented by the unconfessed sin that may have prodded her toward a wandering life in search of salvation. This late (and only partial) confession to a stranger suggests that she may never have been able to recover from an early sense of guilt.

In conclusion, both sections of the *Book* illustrate a whole range of motivations and outcomes for Margery’s journeys, her impulsive daring, and the need to defy social conventions through travel.<sup>68</sup> In addition, Book I primarily documents Margery’s religious self-discovery, while Book II best exposes her inner restlessness, and – on the negative side – also cements the impression that, despite the manifest need to rely on others for support, she could not help but antagonize fellow travelers and acquaintances. Once relations with her companions had become strained, she was at first marginalized, and then excluded altogether,

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*Multilingualism in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Communication and Miscommunication in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 17 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016).

<sup>66</sup> Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 417–18, trans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 178.

<sup>67</sup> Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 419, 420, trans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 179.

<sup>68</sup> Bowers, “Margery Kempe as Traveler” (see note 2), 7–8 argues that travel was in itself an ennobling process, a mark of distinction usually confined to the upper classes, and therefore perceived as transgression against social boundaries when undertaken by members of the lower classes and women in general. Significantly, Saint Birgitta and the two “worshipful” ladies encountered by Margery in two trips belonged to the privileged classes. In Book I she met Dame Margaret Florentine in Assisi and again in Rome, and in Book II the unnamed lady from London travels to Aachen and back. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 58, 68, 173.

with the unpleasant consequence of falling (temporarily) into a lower social rung.<sup>69</sup> Some scholars, accepting Margery's own claims, have identified her boisterous tears and cries as the principal source of the negative responses of her peers (and at least a portion of the clergy), and have wondered why such extreme behavior had instead been accepted in continental holy women such as Angela of Foligno, Dorothea of Montau, or Marie d'Oignies.<sup>70</sup>

Nonetheless, the evidence emerging from her travels, and in particular the last one, discloses other disturbing aspects of her personality, of which loud crying during religious functions may have been only one extreme manifestation.<sup>71</sup> Foremost among them seems to be a striking lack of empathy that may have hindered her ability to evaluate the motivations of others (and sometimes even her own), and needlessly tarnished her otherwise remarkable accomplishments. But whatever impression of Margery's character may be left with the reader, it is hard to deny that her peregrinations, whether performed in the spirit of pilgrimage or not, constitute a topic of major interest in the *Book*, not only for their personal relevance to the narrator, but also because they are vehicles through which the secondary interactive element almost mischievously intrudes into the primary spiritual context. The narrator seems energized when recalling these pivotal episodes of her life, and imparts to them such vigor and immediacy – especially through vivid conversations with a variety of players – as to rival

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69 At one time she was even expected to perform menial tasks for her companions, such as fetching drinks. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 171.

70 See, for example, Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 60–62; and Helfers, “The Mystic as Pilgrim” (see note 2), 41–42. Angela of Foligno and Dorothea of Montau are mentioned in Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 164–66, 179–81. One may notice Marie d'Oignies's discreet reaction to the priest's “gentle” scolding for her crying aloud in church: she knew that she could not restrain tears, so she slipped out of the church to a secluded place. Jacques de Vitry, *The Life of Marie d'Oignies*, trans. Margot H. King (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Peregrine Publishing Co., 1986), reproduced in Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 218–22; here 221.

71 Apparently, the audience of other saintly women either could remove themselves from such distressing displays, or perceived other positive qualities in those mystics that favored indulgence. On this subject, it is noteworthy that Birgitta of Sweden was remembered as being “goodly and meke to every creatur, and that sche had a lawhyng cher” (“goodly and meek to every creature and that she had a laughing countenance”). Windeatt, Kempe, *Margery Kempe* (see note 14), 203–04, trans. Staley, Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe* (see note 1), 69. Atkinsons, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (see note 5), 129, also points out that, although Margery's piety seemed eccentric, “what bothered her contemporaries was not her devotional style but her behavior.” As an aside, it may be opportune to notice that all those mystics belonged to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, while Margery dictated her work forty years after the death of the most recent of them, Dorothea of Montau. The apparent skepticism of Margery's contemporaries may be a specific manifestation of a wider generational attitude.

the near-contemporary masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*. Through a series of animated vignettes, some dramatic while others almost comical, Margery walks across the stage of Europe and beyond, an irrepressible leading lady among a lively cast of supporting characters, and in so doing she enhances her creation with a significant social dimension, expanding its scope well beyond the conventions of the pietistic literature that ostensibly inspired it.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Classen, *The Power of a Woman's Voice* (see note 1), 308, concludes that her work is "an outstanding milestone in the history of women's literature – not necessarily a comfortable one [...]"



Anne Scott

# Spatial Configurations, Movement, and Identity in Chaucer's Romances

## Introduction

Medieval scholars have long since established the heterogeneity of the medieval romance genre. In fact, some critics have argued that the normally-accepted parameters for romance should be abandoned, being replaced with an understanding of the genre in terms of “affiliations” instead.<sup>1</sup> When one examines medieval romances of all shapes and sizes, it is clear that, regardless of the provenance of the romances and their varied lengths and styles, much of the flexibility of the genre and the affiliation among specific romances within this genre resides in the way in which the narratives treat the movement of characters through space and time.<sup>2</sup> What, then, do Chaucer's romances have to say about the idea of individuality and identity when a character moves through time and space through acts of self expression?

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<sup>1</sup> For studies of the medieval romance genre, see John Finlayson, “The Marvellous in Middle English Romance,” *The Chaucer Review* 33.4 (1999): 363–408; Irma Taavitsainen, “Narrative Patterns of Affect in Four Genres of the ‘Canterbury Tales’,” *The Chaucer Review* 30.2 (1995): 191–210; John A. Burrow, “The *Canterbury Tales* I: Romance,” *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion*, ed. Piero Boitani and Jill Mann (Cambridge, New York, and Melbourne, Australia: Cambridge University Press 1986), 102–24; Carol Fewster, “Middle English Romance: Theories and Approaches,” *Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Wolfeboro, NH: D. S. Brewer), 1–49; Rosalind Field, “The Curious History of the Matter of England,” *Boundaries in Medieval Romance*, ed. Neil Cartlidge (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2008), 29–42; and Anne Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises: Traditional Story Techniques and the Configuration of Word and Deed in *King Horn*,” *Studies in Medieval English Romances: Some New Approaches* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 1991), 37–68. As Yin Liu argues, despite the flexibility and amorphous quality of this genre, medieval romance did, indeed, “operate as a genre in late medieval England” and that romances were “marked and organized in manuscript collections in a way that acknowledged both their affiliations with the genre and their differences within the genre” (“Middle English Romance as Prototype Genre,” *The Chaucer Review* 40.4 (2006): 335–53; here 337).

<sup>2</sup> See the end of “Introduction” and the “Conclusion” for more context concerning this theme within other medieval romances.

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Thematically and stylistically, Chaucer's romances<sup>3</sup> are tremendously diverse.<sup>4</sup> They often detail the complex relationship between chivalry and courtly love more common in medieval French romance than in Middle English romance,<sup>5</sup> a relationship that features, as well, in medieval German romances and, to a lesser degree, Spanish romances of the Golden Age.<sup>6</sup> Only one of Chaucer's romances calls itself a Breton *lai*, a sub-species of romance characterized, among other things, by a specific focus on a problem regarding love and, within the Middle English tradition of this sub-genre, the "marvelous" as well.<sup>7</sup> In addition, they range in length from a

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3 Citations for these tales will come from Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, 3rd ed. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), 37–65, 105–21, 178–89, 169–77, and 212–16. All translations are my own. I will also be making passing reference to *The Reeve's Tale* (77–83), *The Merchant's Tale* (153–68), and *The General Prologue* (23–36).

4 Chaucer's romances treat the topics of chivalric adventure, philosophical debate, marital sovereignty, class identity, the *bel inconnu*, rape, infidelity, "gentillesse," human ignorance, loss, kingly power, *auctoritas*, the interference of pagan gods in a human universe, and battles with giants, among many other themes and issues. For a discussion of the pagan influence in the *Knight's Tale*, see Julia Boffey, "Chaucerian Prisoners: The Context of *The Kingis Quair*," *Chaucer and Fifteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Julia Boffey and Janet Cowen, King's College London Medieval Studies, 5 (London: King's College Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1991), 84–1012, here 85.

5 Liu, "Middle English Romance as Prototype Genre" (see note 1), 346, 344.

6 W. H. Jackson discusses the relationship between love and chivalry in Hartmann von Aue, "Knighthood, Love Service and the Crusade in Hartmann's *Klage* and his Lyrics," *Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Germany: The Works of Hartmann von Aue*, ed. William Henry Jackson. Arthurian Studies, 34 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 167–93. See also Daniel Eisenberg for a discussion of the intersection of chivalry and love found in medieval and early modern Hispanic romances. Although women "and love usually play a secondary role in the Spanish romances of chivalry. ... [l]ove, of course, was seen as a refining element, felt to improve men, and the knight will fall in love at some point with the woman he will eventually marry. ... The knight's courtship of his lady ... will usually be secret, and beset with external difficulties. ... The [typical] romance will usually end with the marriage of the knight, ... the birth or conception of a son, and the protagonists accession to the throne" ("A Typical Romance of Chivalry," *Romances of Chivalry in the Spanish Golden Age* (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta Monographs, 1982), 70–71. See also F. Regina Psaki, "Chivalry and Medieval Italian Romance," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (New York, Cambridge, et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 203–17, who states that the earliest Italian romances "are French texts in their original language. There was a considerable French influence and presence in Italian territory" (203).

7 *The Franklin's Tale* (see note 2). In their introduction (*The Middle English Breton Lays*. Middle English Texts [Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995]), editors Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury state that "infusions of the marvelous and strange cast an aura of enchantment" about Middle English lays. While there is also an undercurrent of "plausible social contexts [that] lend the poems an air of realism," Middle English lays tend to address "a number of marvelous happenings" within the context of "war, woe, joy, happiness, treachery, guile, adventure,

few hundred to over two thousand lines. In sum, it is not likely that Chaucer's well-known inventiveness and disruption of expectations<sup>8</sup> for generic conventions, as well as his "signal indeterminacy"<sup>9</sup> concerning all matters literary, would allow us to affix the label of "exemplar" to his romances when we compare them to other medieval romances, whether English or not.

It is this "signal indeterminacy," however, that becomes key to our understanding a specific, even singular way in which Chaucer's romances do share more than a passing affiliation with one another and become, in their own right, wonderful examples of Chaucer's own vision for the genre. Despite their tremendous internal variation, Chaucer's romances demonstrate a remarkable coherence with each other when it comes to an attribute pervasive in all of them: namely, their depiction of space as very "plastic" and multi-functional – spaces that characters occupy, converse in, and travel through, all the while the characters are shaping their identities and that create unique narrative, rhetorical, and thematic frameworks for each romance. Spaces of all kinds in Chaucer's romances seem purposefully constructed and contextualized so as to be redefined, expanded, contracted, stretched, shrunk, manipulated, and especially broken out of – all in the interest of riveting the characters', and the readers', attention on key moments that force them, and us, to come to terms with the nature and limitations of individual volition, the shaping of identity, and the codes of conduct that characters must honor for them to be functioning members in their communities. Crucial to this redefining and manipulation of space in Chaucer's romances is the characters' behavior while they occupy certain spaces: namely, their conversations with other characters within certain spaces; their physical movement in and travel through spaces, whether large or small, man-made or natural; and their capacity to see within, through, and beyond spaces of all kinds in order for the characters to assess their boundaries, physical and figurative, thereby taking stock of their potential as human beings.

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bawdiness, ribaldry, the fairy world, and most of all, love" (4–5). In addition, some "scholars see [the connection of the Franklin's Tale] to the lay tradition in general and to [Marie de France's] *Equitan* in particular, especially in terms of courtly love, magic, and idealized characters" (*The Franklin's Tale* [see note 2], 896, explanatory note for l. 710.) By the "marvelous," I am using the connotation of this word as it appears in Marie de France's *Guigemar*, i.e., "the extraordinary" but not necessarily "the supernatural"; Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, "Movement and Mobility: Plot," eadem, *Marie de France: A Critical Companion*, Gallica, 4 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: 2012), 121.

<sup>8</sup> Burrow, "The *Canterbury Tales* I: Romance" (see note 1), 109.

<sup>9</sup> Carolyn P. Collette and Nancy Mason Bradbury, "Time, Measure, and Value in Chaucer's Art and Chaucer's World," *The Chaucer Review* 43.4 (2009): 347–50; here 349.

The literary aspects of *The Knight's Tale* are so carefully structured around spaces—physical, geographic, natural, man-made, linguistic, and psychological – that the tale provides a veritable cornucopia of shifting spatial attributes and functions that help us establish the parameters of the nature and function of space in Chaucer's other romances as well. When we attend to the ways in which spaces in *The Knight's Tale* set up a “horizon of expectations” for its audience and readers (to borrow a term from reader response theorists Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser),<sup>10</sup> only for us to discover that this tale has disrupted these very expectations through any number of narrative, dialogic, and stylistic means, we therefore come to find that this particular romance simply has more to say about the world, the human condition, and self expression than what we first glean as we make our way through the story in a naïve first reading, or apply preconceptions about medieval romance to this tale without fully understanding how Chaucer may be forging his own path for this genre.

This restless quality as perceived through Chaucer's use of spaces within *The Knight's Tale*, this unsettling of certainties which forces his readers to reconsider, through “double readings,”<sup>11</sup> the meaning, direction, and outcome of his

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**10** Hans Robert Jauss, “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory,” *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti. *Theory and History of Literature*, 2 (1970; Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 22–24: “A corresponding process of the continuous establishing and altering of horizons also determines the relationship of the individual text to the succession of texts that forms the genre” (23). I will be using the idea of “individual text[s]” not necessarily in reference to various romances themselves but rather to passages, i.e., selected “texts” within Chaucer's romances that evolve through the course of the narrative to shape our awareness of Chaucer's shifting uses of space within these romances. See also Wolfgang Iser, “Strategies,” *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore, MD, and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 86–106. Several medieval scholars have shown an interest in the way in which medieval romances shape reader responses: Liu, “Middle English Romance as Prototype Genre” (see note 1), 344; Taavitsainen, “Narrative Patterns of Affect in Four Genres of the *Canterbury Tales* (see note 1), 191; and Fewster, “Middle English Romance: Theories and Approaches” (see note 1), 1, 4, and 12.

**11** Deconstructionists have taken into consideration how meaning unfolds for a reader through first and second readings, which are commonly called “double readings” (Robert Dale Parker, “Deconstruction,” *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies* [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015], 89); and Reader Response critics have shown how a text's meaning takes shape through its “dynamic relationship with the reader's expectations, projections, conclusions, judgments, and assumptions,” shaped, as they are, by strategies in that text (Stanley Fish, “Introduction: Or How I stopped Worrying and Learned to Love Interpretation,” *Critical Theory: A Reader for Literary and Cultural Studies*, ed. Robert Dale Parker [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012], 820–21). My study will be making use, in a general way, of a few key ideas provided by contemporary literary theory, which lend themselves to an analysis of Chaucer's romances. I will not be trying to capture the reading

romances through his spatial reconfigurations, is, I argue, a defining feature of the other four romances, as well. Indeed, *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, *The Squire's Tale*, *The Franklin's Tale*, and *The Tale of Sir Thopas* all show evidence of spaces (public vs. private, natural vs. manmade, open vs. closed, literal vs. figurative) being reshaped, redefined, and challenged such that this very defining trait becomes both part and parcel of Chaucer's conceptualization of this genre: his "signature" on a genre defined by its flux, flexibility, and inconsistencies. The purpose of this essay is to clarify this Chaucerian "signature" by examining his spatial configurations and reconfigurations within these five romances, thereby not only providing substance to Chaucer's contribution to the medieval romance genre, but also paving our way to understanding spatial configurations as they might occur in the Breton *lais* of Marie de France, the romances of Chrétien de Troyes and Sir Thomas Malory, and the anonymous *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.<sup>12</sup>

A note on the concept of "space" as it will be used in this essay: Despite the fact that spaces in medieval literature were often rendered indistinctly,<sup>13</sup> without a sense of mathematical or geographical precision, one can still employ useful parameters and terminology for discussing spaces as we find them employed in medieval romances. Distilling and adapting some of the ideas in Henri Lefebvre's pioneering study, *The Production of Space*, I will be defining spaces in Chaucer's romances to mean geometrical (Euclidean) three-dimensional areas that are (1) distinguished by certain boundaries, demarcations, and vantage points, (2) characterized by the literary, political, and relational ideas, assumptions, and "operations" that have helped to produce them, (3) having an "organic" quality that reflects the "relationships upon which social [and political] organization is

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experience of a medieval reader, necessarily, but would like to assume that Chaucer presents all kinds of readers with interpretive challenges that come about when his rhetorical strategies and goals in his romances, as seen through his depiction of space, shift through any number of means. For an excellent study of the way that medieval readers actually read and processed texts, see Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (New York: Viking, 1996), especially his comments about St. Augustine and St. Ambrose.

**12** See the conclusion for further remarks about the treatment of space and identity within these non-Chaucerian romances.

**13** See Albrecht Classen, "The Innovative Perception of Space (Europe) in Late Medieval German Literature: The Spatial Turn in Light of Eleonore of Austria's *Pontus und Sidonia* (ca. 1450–1460)," *Neohelicon* 43.2 (2016): 543–57; here 543, 544, for comments about the vagueness and imprecision of spatial dimensions in the Middle Ages. Classen has also edited a collection of essays on space titled *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 9 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter), 2012. For Classen's volume on urban space, see note 14 below.

founded,” (4) suggesting rules and guidelines for inclusion and exclusion, as well as the relationship between these two elements, and finally, (5) animated by the very energy, whether individual or social, that makes these spaces a “reality.”<sup>14</sup> The spaces that will be discussed frequently in this essay – towns and cities; kingdoms and courts; natural, wild, and rural spaces; gardens; prisons; houses and bedrooms; and the arena or amphitheater – all share the six traits listed above. Interestingly, several of these traits also help define linguistic “spaces” in Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale* as well, which become instrumental in demarcating, defining, and animating the human experience of grief.

## Confinement, Liberation, and Shifting Perceptions of Space in *The Knight’s Tale*

### *The Prison*

Prior to the prison scene in this tale, Chaucer establishes what seem to be well-defined parameters for our interpretation of the prison. Before the two knights are taken to prison, the Knight-narrator makes it very clear that Palamon and Arcite must dwell in this prison tower “Perpetually”; no “raunsoun” or “gold” will spring them from this jail (ll. 1024–32). The description of the prison room window, with its “thikke” bars (l. 1075), also reinforces this somber prelude to their incarceration. Despite the fact that Chaucer knew that prisons could well

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<sup>14</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Maldon, MA, Victoria, Australia, and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 1, 13, 15, 73, 192, 229, and 294. Steven Greenblatt has also employed the useful term “social energy” to characterize the “life” that literary works seem to possess long after both the “death of the author and the death of the culture for which the author wrote.” I am using Greenblatt’s concept of “social energy” to help define the linguistic spaces in Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale* that “produce, shape, and organize [the] collective physical and mental experiences” that certain speeches and type-scenes within this tale purport to create and sustain in their listeners. Steven Greenblatt, “The Circulation of Social Energy,” *Critical Theory* (see note 11), 557–58. See also the sub-section titled “Linguistic Spaces” below. Urban spaces, while often conveying, and creating assumptions of, order, regulation, control, and “precision,” could still be places of danger, powerlessness, and loss of control (Jean Jost, “Urban and Liminal Space in Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale*: Perilous or Protective?” *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen [New York and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009], 373–94; here 380, 389, 394). See the sub-section below titled “The Amphitheater” for a further discussion of this type of urban space.

provide a place for community and even ingresses and egresses,<sup>15</sup> he certainly does not stress the social or permeable qualities of this confining prison environment, the result being that readers cannot help seeing the tower as solid and impenetrable, at least for now.

However, several elements of this scene conspire rapidly to undo this expectation. First, the Knight delves into a springtime description of Emelye, who is seen occupying, during a “morwe of May,” the garden that adjoins the prison wall (ll. 1033–61). This description occurs immediately following the narrator’s statement that the hapless knights now languish, “in angwissh and in wo,” within this prison (ll. 1030–31). The placement of this garden scene, which contains stock imagery of springtime (and therefore re-birth), plants a seed of hope in the readers’ minds before such an image enters the minds of the two imprisoned knights, predisposing the readers to wish for Palamon’s and Arcite’s release from this prison. Second, the two knights’ “gayler” (jailer) permits Palamon to roam within a “chamber an heigh” (ll. 1064–65), thereby conveying the impression that there is more to this prison than a single, cramped, cell. The fact that the warden is willing to allow Palamon to wander about suggests that there is a humane optimism built into the scene, implying that prisoners might exercise some free will within the confines of the prison.

Third, the chamber permits Palamon to look out a window toward the city and into the “gardyn, ful of braunches grene” (l. 1067). This vantage point looks forward to a very helpful parallel within Kate Chopin’s “A Story of an Hour” written in 1894. In this very short story, Mrs. Mallard, a newly grieving widow, having apparently just lost her husband in a train wreck, climbs the stairs to her room, locking the door behind her. As she glances out her window, she sees the green leaves opening in springtime and patches of blue sky peeping through the stormy sky. A few moments later, Mrs. Mallard seems transformed, unfettered: “She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all

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15 See Julia Boffey, “Chaucerian Prisoners: The Context of *The Kingis Quair*” (see note 4), 84, for her comments about Perkyn’s visits to Newgate. Boffey reminds us, as well, of the “grisly [prison] setting of the Monk’s account of the ‘tragedie’ of Hugolino” in the *Monk’s Tale*. For Newgate’s horrible conditions, see Margery Bassett, “Newgate Prison in the Middle Ages,” *Speculum* 18.2 (1943): 233–46. Christine Winter furthers the idea that the foul conditions at Newgate, in particular the toxic air, resulted from external (not internal) conditions (“Prisons and Punishments in Late Medieval London,” Ph.D. thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2012, 3; <http://www.medievalists.net/2014/07/prisons-punishments-late-medieval-london/>; last accessed on Aug. 7, 2017). Winter also devotes a chapter to outlining the ways in which prisoners could spend their time while imprisoned. Some broke up the monotony by writing; others “could pay for the privilege of leaving the prison with an escort to enable them to attend to their affairs in order to raise money to pay their debts” (171).

aquiver with the new spring life. ... When she abandoned herself[,] a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: ‘free, free, free!’”<sup>16</sup> Like Mrs. Mallard in this short story, Palamon is able to adjust his dismal perceptions regarding his situation after he looks at the greenery below, spying the “fresshe Emelye”<sup>17</sup> among the garden delights and thereby having his hope kindled through love at first sight.<sup>18</sup>

And fourth: Palamon’s visual “escape” from prison – his gazing at Emelye – which Arcite then relishes shortly thereafter, ignites an unplanned and unhappy argument between them, damaging their knightly code of brotherhood. Once their knightly code has been threatened and Arcite has been let free by Duke Perotheus (which is an act of luck as well as friendship, for who could have predicted that Perotheus would have behaved in this fashion?), Palamon drugs his jailer and escapes from this prison tower, as well. In other words, the jail, as a physical space restricting movement, certainly cannot stop this chain reaction of events to occur. Its significance as a space of confinement completely recedes

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**16** Kate Chopin, “Story of an Hour,” *The Complete Works of Kate Chopin*, ed. Per Seyersted (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 352–54; here 353. Kate Chopin (née Catherine O’Flaherty, 1850–1904) is best known for her novel, *The Awakening* (1899), to which many students were introduced in the 1960s and 1970s. Students of these decades, through the 1980s, believed that Edna – the strong, female protagonist – exemplified independence and uninhibited sexuality. When the work was translated into Polish, female readers in that country were astounded that Edna could actually live in an abode of her very own (Emily Toth, introduction to *Unveiling Kate Chopin* [Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 1999], xx). Chopin’s “A Story of an Hour” renders, in keen detail, the yearnings of a wife who is finally free of her husband’s suffocating love, her marriage being perceived by her as a prison of sorts from which she escapes, for just an hour, only to realize (with tragic consequences) that her husband is not actually dead but has survived the train wreck after all.

**17** The *Knight’s Tale* (see note 2), l. 1068.

**18** Charles d’Orleans, Francois Villon, King James I of Scotland, and Oswald von Wolkenstein were all imprisoned at one point (or several points) in their lives. Anthony C. Spearing explores the motif of captivity in Charles of Orleans’ writing in “Prison, Writing, Absence: Representing the Subject in the English Poems of Charles D’Orleans,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 53.1 (March 1992): 83–99. Charlotte Mary Yonge, *The Caged Lion* (New York: Silver Scroll Publishing, 2015; 1901), provides a fictional account of James’ captivity while in England during the years 1421–1422. John Fox, “A Contested Will – Villon’s Testament,” *Medium Aevum* 62.1 (1993): 87–101, reviews Jacques T. E. Thomas’s study of Villon’s perceptions of captivity titled *Lecture du Testament Villon, huitains I a XLV et LXXVII a LXXXIV*. Finally, Albrecht Classen translates, as part of *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein: An English Translation of the Complete Works (1327/6/77–1445)* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), those poems by Oswald that describe the seven “chambers” of hell as “prisons,” replete with Dantesque images of “boiling foam tortures,” “horrifying, disgusting smell[s],” and “heavy, eternal dread” (107–08) – images, perhaps, that were not foreign to Oswald as a “deject prisoner” (5) in his own right.



into the background once both knights realize that their actual sight of Emelye in the garden cannot be hampered by the prison walls. Therefore, what seems to be in the “foreground” of the narrative – absolute imprisonment – recedes into the “background,” to be replaced by an idea that now occupies the foreground<sup>19</sup>: potential freedom. Wanting to act on his visual apprehension of Emily (thanks to the fortuitous juxtaposition of prison space with the space of the garden), Arcite decides for both of them that “everich of [them] take his aventure” (l. 1186). Here, the idea of “aventure,” meaning “fortune” or “happenstance” rather than actual, physical adventuring, contributes to a kind of wild-card effect within this scene that gathers its original momentum from Palamon’s access to the “chambre an heigh” and that all-important glance, or gaze,<sup>20</sup> out the window. We are now not surprised when one man is ransomed and the other escapes from this dismal, inflexible prison space.

Julia Boffey has remarked that physical prisons can also figuratively underscore “love’s prison,”<sup>21</sup> the hopeless, confining aspects of misdirected or unrequited love. It is certainly true that Palamon’s and Arcite’s prison can be seen as ontological as much as physical.<sup>22</sup> However, I would argue that it is exactly this love at first sight, initiated by this important gaze out the window,<sup>23</sup> which finally pushes the young knights in a positive rather than negative way to take stock of their captivity and to see their captivity not in a physical sense but rather as a temporary state of being, no matter how “dampned” or perpetual it might seem at first – a temporary state of being which can be modified through “aventure,” each man for himself. In this way, a unique and complex interplay of physical boundaries, evolving emotional states (including both love and anger), volition,<sup>24</sup> luck, “visual perception,”<sup>25</sup> and the human need for agency, generates a synergistic

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19 Iser, “Strategies” (see note 11), 95–97.

20 A more detailed discussion of the “gaze,” as a narrative element affecting spaces, will follow.

21 Julia Boffey, “Chaucerian Prisoners: the Context of *The Kingis Quair*” (see note 4), 85.

22 See Jill Mann, “Chance and Destiny in *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Knight’s Tale*,” *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion* (see note 1), 75–92, for the way in which the two knights’ imprisonment helps clarify, for them, their depressing existence through the interplay of fate, predestination, and free will.

23 Peter Brown, introduction to *Chaucer and the Making of Optical Space* (Oxford, Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 2007), 223, discusses this important “optical” moment in the tale, as well as the changes that Chaucer made to the prison scene from his source material in Boccaccio’s *Tesieda* (220–21). Chaucer has enhanced the hopeless, helpless aspect of the prison.

24 William Woods, in his introduction to *Chaucerian Spaces: Spatial Poetics in Chaucer’s Opening Tales* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), discusses the importance of *The Knight’s Tale* as a kind of “allegory of will,” as characters act out their “individual intention[s]” (2).

25 Brown, introduction to *Chaucer and the Making of Optical Space* (see note 23), 16.

form of power greater than the prison walls themselves, allowing Palamon and Arcite to transcend their hopeless state by imagining something better,<sup>26</sup> and, if possible, taking action on it. As their eyes “travel” to embrace the vision of Emelye in the garden, so their subsequent agency involves forms of movement and travel through, and outside, the prison walls in their attempt to make good on their desire for her. In this way, Chaucer shows the idea that traversing space is essential in the development of his characters.

There is one more factor that lends great force to this chain reaction of events, and this is the knights’ sight of Emelye, specifically her actual human body moving through time and space, as she “romed up and down” (l. 1069).<sup>27</sup> Emelye’s innocent movement in the garden directly precedes both knights’ visual apprehension of her. Unable to move freely themselves, Palamon and Arcite feel their imprisonment more acutely after seeing Emelye walk and roam in the garden space. If, as Peter Brown says, the “human body is crucial in mediating and representing a sense of space,”<sup>28</sup> then Palamon’s and Arcite’s confined bodies certainly call attention to the impermeable qualities of this prison space as well as their inability to mediate that space physically except in a limited way. Only a change in perception, facilitated by the two knights’ visual apprehension of Emelye’s movement in the garden,<sup>29</sup> allows them to see their situation in a different light so that the possibility of mediating, and moving through, a different, less-confining space becomes possible. After Arcite sees Emelye walking in the garden, he decides right then and there that he must “seen hire atte leeste weye [in the least amount of time]” (l. 1121), implying that he will take whatever action possible to do just that. Although, for a time, Arcite perceives his release from prison as worse than prison and really a kind of death (ll. 1235–38) because he cannot see Emelye in the garden, he is now free to battle Palamon for her hand, twice, later in the narrative. Thanks to Palamon’s perception of both Emelye’s movement in the garden as well as Arcite’s movement out of it, who has now traveled to “Thebes at [his] large” (l. 1283), Palamon himself feels the sting of his captivity so much that he takes action as well, escaping of his own accord.

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**26** As stated in the headnote to *Boundaries in Medieval Romance* (see note 1), medieval “romance frequently ... capitalizes on the dramatic and suggestive possibilities implicit in boundaries – not only the geographical, political, and cultural ... but also more metaphorical demarcations . ... [i.e.,] boundaries between different kinds of experience or perception.” Here, the headnote is referring to changes in perception brought about through, say, magic or altered states of perception. One can argue, perhaps, that the experience of falling in love creates an altered state that helps, then, to alter the two knights’ perceptions of their current, physical condition.

**27** Compare to l. 1052 (“walketh up and down”) and l. 1113 (“romed to and fro”).

**28** Brown, introduction to *Chaucer and the Making of Optical Space* (see note 23), 16.

**29** See below for a more detailed look at Emelye in the garden.

In both cases, the act of perceiving “human bod[ies] ... mediating and representing a sense of space” affects both knights in palpable ways, which leads to their subsequent actions, namely, their own human bodies mediating and negotiating new spaces.

What starts off as our dismal interpretation of the two knights' situation, shaped by Chaucer's narrative, stylistic, structural, and dialogic choices for this prison scene, becomes something entirely different, more nuanced than we might have expected after a first reading. Moreover, the prison scene's carefully-defined and yet shifting spatial functions and significance help to sharpen the contrast between individual volition and public duty, more specifically, the knights' incapacity to entertain, simultaneously, both “public and private awareness.”<sup>30</sup> The contiguity of garden and prison space, Palamon's and Arcite's subsequent awareness that life holds more for them than the prison could ever provide, and their fallout, as brothers-in-arms, allow their personal desires to obfuscate their chivalric obligations to each other as fellow knights and Palamon's need to honor the law of the land by staying in this prison “perpetually” by not attempting to escape. Indeed, the interdependence of “sentence” and “solaas”<sup>31</sup> – pleasure obtained by meditating on this moral issue – is made possible through Chaucer's attentiveness to the way that spaces affect perceptions and actions.

### ***The Garden; the Altar of Diana***

Evaluating the garden scene in more detail with respect to Emelye's place within it yields more relevant information concerning the way that spaces in the *Knight's Tale* call attention to the idea of confinement as a relative thing, dependent upon how the space is viewed by others, who is doing the viewing, and the myriad literary factors that delimit and redefine the idea of confinement as the narrative progresses.

It is certainly possible that a woman's presence in a garden carries with it both positive and negative expectations rooted in images of either the Virgin Mary occupying a *hortus conclusus*, an enclosed garden symbolizing the protected and

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<sup>30</sup> Brown, introduction to *Chaucer and the Making of Optical Space* (see note 23), 16.

<sup>31</sup> *The General Prologue* (see note 2), l. 798. The Host provides these two criteria for the tale-tellers as they embark on their tale-telling contest. “Solaas” was very much tied to the companion idea of “sentence” as well, and a story's didactic significance could well have provided pleasure for Chaucer's audience.

immaculate womb of Mary as mother of Christ,<sup>32</sup> or Eve in the Garden of Eden. If women themselves had any agency within the space of a medieval garden that differs from the unique agency of Mary to conceive Christ through an immaculate conception, one might well assume that this agency was often destructive in the way that Eve's eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and then tempting Adam to do the same, was perceived as destructive. The stock medieval idea that is stressed here, of course, is that women are temptresses and instruments of the Devil,<sup>33</sup> and that temptations (or worse) take place in gardens, thanks to women's seductive behavior. A garden could also be seen as a *locus amoenus* for sexual pleasure, and this is how the idea of the garden was conceived by Guillaume de Lorris in his contribution to the long allegorical work, *Roman de la rose*.<sup>34</sup> This dream vision also suggests that the breaching of a woman's chastity occurs in gardens, that gardens themselves are symbols of a woman's genitalia, and that the conquering of a woman's virginity is fraught with toil and risk.

Chaucer knew all about this association of gardens with women's carnal nature and with sexual temptation, as seen in his *Merchant's Tale*.<sup>35</sup> In addition, in Book 3 of Boccaccio's *Teseida* (and Chaucer's source for this romance), Emilia is making floral crowns for herself and having self-conscious thoughts about how nice it might to be observed in the garden by those who take delight in doing so. She is also described as being "Barefoot and clad [only] in her shift," entertaining herself by "singing amorous songs" and conscious of the way that her beauty might be affecting her observers. As Boccaccio's narrator claims, Emilia and all vain women "enslave others while they keep themselves free"<sup>36</sup> – a not-so-oblique reference to love as a prison, and women's seductive ways as the cause of men's enslavement.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See Laura L. Howes, "Gardens Chaucer Knew," *Chaucer's Gardens and the Language of Convention* (Miami, Orlando, et al.: University Press of Florida), 15–34, here 19, for a discussion of the *hortus conclusus* and other *topoi* that Chaucer employed in his descriptions of gardens in the *Canterbury Tales*. Howes also has devoted a chapter to the gendered quality of gardens in "Gendered Paradises in *The Canterbury Tales*," 83–109, something that I also address in more detail below.

<sup>33</sup> Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, ed. M. M. Postan (Cambridge, London, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 14.

<sup>34</sup> Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, "The Garden, the Fountain, and the Rose," *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. Charles Dahlberg (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 32–53.

<sup>35</sup> *The Merchant's Tale* (see note 2), ll. 2354–63.

<sup>36</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio, "Emilia Appears to Palemone and Arcita," *Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds*, ed. Robert P. Miller, trans. Bernadette Marie McCoy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 323–26.

<sup>37</sup> The iconography of women's enslavement of men can also take the form of a woman "riding" a man as if he were a beast of burden, which we find in numerous illustrations of the story of Aristotle and Phyllis. This tale illustrates the humiliating way in which even a sage philosopher

However, Chaucer, in his retelling of Boccaccio's garden scene, sanitizes the portrait of Emilia within this garden so that Emelye is merely wandering "up and down" (l. 1069) right when Palamon happens to glance down and into the garden. The emphasis seems to be taken off her physical, sexual nature and her type-cast role as temptress, and is, rather, placed on her gentle movement as part of the garden itself, which draws the attention of Palamon and then Arcite. From the vantage point of the two captive knights, the garden is most definitely not a prison, because it permits Emelye's movement in seclusion and it is full of natural life, budding and blooming. Therefore, Emelye's presence in the garden, along with her harmless, apparently spontaneous movement (more so than her overt sexuality), cause the knights to remove the perceptual blinders they have about their static prison situation and to act accordingly.

The message derived from the actions taking place within these two contiguous spaces is not that "women are temptresses" or that women's carnal nature enslaves men (an idea that Chrétien de Troyes also explores in his twelfth-century romance *Yvain*, followed by Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein*)<sup>38</sup> but rather that love stirs the heart in profound, unmistakable ways; it causes men to move mountains, break off sworn friendships, and escape from impenetrable prisons. A once-impossible, permanent, life-sucking, and depressing space now becomes a temporary obstacle to be surmounted for the sake of Palamon's and Arcite's expressions of love. Therefore, the common argument that Middle English romances denude their French (or continental) sources by removing the amorous descriptions strictly for the sake of action and adventure,<sup>39</sup> thereby creating an inferior redaction, does not do service to the changes that Chaucer has made in this scene. By removing the passages from Boccaccio that overtly sexualize Emilia and having the knights concentrate on Emelye's verdant and natural presence in the garden, Chaucer instead has his knights, and us, concentrate on the philosophical and perceptual dimensions of captivity, the qualities of life that Palamon and Arcite lack by being

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can fall prey to a woman's wiles, as Phyllis mounts Aristotle like a horse, puts a saddle on him, and places a bit between his teeth. For several illustrations of this scene, see George Sarton, "Aristotle and Phillis," *Isis* 14.1 (May 1930): 8–19; here 15–19.

**38** Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain, or the Knight with the Lion*, trans. Ruth Harwood Cline (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1975); and Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein: The Knight with the Lion*, trans. J. W. Thomas (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979). This popular romance also has both medieval English and Icelandic versions: "Ywain and Gawaine," *Sir Perceval of Galles and Ywain and Gawaine*, ed. Mary Flowers, Middle English Texts (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995); and "Ívens Saga," *Erex Saga and Ívens Saga: The Old Norse Versions of Chrétien de Troyes's Erec and Yvain*, trans. Foster W. Blaisdell, Jr., and Marianne E. Kalinke (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), 35–85.

**39** Fewster, "Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance" (see note 1), 21–22, 29.

there – namely, a sense of thriving and acting on their desires – and, finally, the actions needed to correct that situation.

Importantly, we cannot say what *Emelye*'s vantage point is, in this garden scene. Aside from her roaming quietly within this garden space, *Emelye*'s description merges so much with the garden's flora that she becomes, in essence, part of the garden itself: her hue is as red as roses, and her neck is "as long and graceful as a lily's" (ll. 1033–37).<sup>40</sup> This kind of poetic language comes close to fusing the beauty of *Emelye* with the beauty of nature, and it leads William Woods, in his study of Chaucerian spaces, to conclude that her "emplacement" in this scene is an "eloquent symbol of *Emelye*'s 'being-in-the-world'."<sup>41</sup>

If Woods is accurate in his summation here, then one can logically assume that *Emelye*, as a part of nature, can also act in the way that nature acts, namely, organically and with a tendency toward being free and unconstrained by man-made structures. Instead, this kind of "emplacement" conveys the opposite, i.e., a very static and passive portrayal of *Emelye*. Aside from her "to and fro" movements in the garden, her presence seems almost immobile and undistinguished. *Emelye*'s "being-in-the-world" at this point in the romance seems euphemistic for her being "planted," "(em)placed," or inscribed within a static medieval romance convention: namely, that men are subjects who do the gazing, women are objects that are gazed upon,<sup>42</sup> and *Emelye*'s "emplacement" in this garden space serves an

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<sup>40</sup> Woods, introduction to *Chaucerian Spaces: Spatial Poetics in Chaucer's Opening Tales* (see note 24), 6–7.

<sup>41</sup> Woods, introduction to *Chaucerian Spaces* (see note 24), 7.

<sup>42</sup> Susan Conkin Akbari has analyzed, in detail, a great number of primary sources devoted to the illustration of optics in Classical and medieval times (*Seeing through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* [Toronto, Buffalo, NY, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2004]). Despite the prevalence of mutual gazes in medieval literature, the depiction of gazes in several medieval works and romances strongly suggests that the gazes are often initiated by male characters and directed to their female beloveds. See, for example, Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love* ed. Frederick W. Locke, trans. John Jay Parry (New York: Ungar, 1987), 42 (rule XVI): "When a love suddenly catches sight of his beloved his heart palpitates"; and "when a man sees some woman fit for love and shaped according to his taste, he begins at once to lust after her in his heart" (3). In these and other passages, Capellanus stresses vision as being important within the beginning stages of a man's falling in love: this "inborn suffering comes, therefore, from seeing and meditating" on what one sees (3). In Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (Sarah Stanbury, "The Lover's Gaze in *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde: 'Subgit to all Poesye'*, ed. R. A. Shoaf, *Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies* [Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1992], 224–38; here 224); Chrétien's *Yvain* (see note 52), 36; Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale* (see note 2, and below); Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas* (see note 2 and below); and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (2nd ed., ed. Norman Davis [1925; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967], ll. 968–69), male characters initiate the gazes. Film critics, in addition,

important role not for her but as a necessary element of the negotiation between Palamon and Arcite so as to cement their own friendship, or not, as the case may be. In the end, what has been naturalized in this scene is not merely a woman's beauty equaling or rivaling the beauty of nature, but rather the role that a woman, as object, plays in the homo-social rivalry expressed between two men who desire that woman – a rivalry, as observed by Eve Sedgwick, that can be as “intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved.”<sup>43</sup> Viewed in this manner, Emelye's “emplacement” within the garden cannot showcase her own agency at all, unless, of course, it is an agency designed, stereotypically and thus inelegantly, to enhance her qualities as a flirt and temptress in a man's world.<sup>44</sup>

Emelye's relative passivity and stasis within the garden space become much more obvious when we find her praying, in Part 3 of the romance, at the altar of Diana. Here, she actively seeks, in her own voice, the succor and compassion from this goddess so that she can remain “a mayden al [her] lyf” (l. 2305) and not be forced to marry either Palamon or Arcite. Through her prayer to Diana, Emelye imbues this altar, this apparently small and, one assumes, private space, not with a passive sense of “being-in-the-world” but instead with undeniable references to moving and acting in this world: a world not of man-made structures or strictures (such as marriage and childbirth), but of the wilderness, where hunting, “venerye,” and simple walking in the “wodes wilde” can take place without restriction (ll. 2308–09). Her very prayer, which is full of serious, “performative” speech acts<sup>45</sup> such as pleas, commands, and expressions of intention, desire, and volition,<sup>46</sup> helps create a space, an imaginary world, that is so big and wide and

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have long since capitalized on the idea of the “male gaze” as being paramount in the way viewers process films (see note 49 for further discussion on this issue).

<sup>43</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Gender Asymmetry and Erotic Triangles,” *Critical Theory: A Reader for Literary and Cultural Studies* (see note 11), 321–26; here 321.

<sup>44</sup> I disagree with Peter Brown's assessment that a “number of different ‘Emelyes’ have now stepped forward, each occupying a different space in the eye of the observer, and turning the garden into a heterotopia” (“Chivalric Space: The Knight's Tale,” *Chaucer and the Making of Optical Space* [see note 23], 223). The figurative notion that Emelye “steps forward” at all, in this scene, does not square with the way in which she is absorbed by the garden's greenery and therefore becomes part of it.

<sup>45</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 118–19; and *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 4th ed., ed. Raman Selden, Petter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker (London, New York, et al.: Prentice Hall, 1997), 175. For an application of Speech Act Theory to Middle English romance, see Anne Scott, “Language as Convention, Language as Sociolect in *Havelok the Dane*,” *Studies in Philology* 89 (1992): 137–60.

<sup>46</sup> *The Knight's Tale* (see note 2), ll. 2304–18: “I / Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf, / Ne nevere wol I be no love ne wyf”; “Now help me, lady, sith ye may and kan ... / And fro me turne away hir [Palamon's and Arcite's] hertes.”

wild that only a world that big, wide, and wild can contain Emily's desires and hopes. And in that imaginary space, Emelye reaffirms her true identity: "I am ... / A mayde ... / And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe" (ll. 2308–10). The altar scene, therefore, teases out what we almost might call a "queering" of space.<sup>47</sup> Through the uttering and pronouncement of her oration, Emelye forges for herself a safe place outside the normative spaces of marriage and childbirth so that she might conduct her life in service to Diana. Emelye's yearned-for "walk[ing]" will not take place within (what now feels like a) cramped garden abutting a prison tower wall, but rather in the "wodes wilde" and world at large, with no one gazing at her or restricting her movement or desires except, perhaps, the goddess Diana herself, who would be there in any case to protect her from any male encroachments on her freedom.<sup>48</sup>

We can finally see, now, that the garden that Emelye occupies earlier, and in which she, relatively passive and silent, is spied on by Palamon and Arcite, actually seems prison-like. Even her repetitive motions within the garden mirror those of a captive: all during the time that she is roaming "up and down," back and forth within the garden in a kind of pacing way, Palamon himself is also pacing, "romynge to and fro" within the chamber above his prison cell (l. 1071). Viewed through this comparative lens, this garden, therefore, now comes across to the readers as a confining and unpleasant place in which Emelye is surveilled by two myopic and love-sick knights and is found desirable for the goals and outcomes of courtly love that do not suit her in the least, though Palamon and Arcite certainly find her goddess-like and perfect for their own desires.<sup>49</sup> Although Emelye

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<sup>47</sup> Judith Halberstam, "Queer Temporalities and Postmodern Geographies," *Critical Theory: A Reader for Literary and Cultural Studies* (see note 11), 364–77.

<sup>48</sup> When Emelye asks that Diana keep her from the fate of Actaeon, a hapless hunter who stumbled upon Diana when she was naked and whom Diana then transforms into a deer, which his own hunting dogs subsequently kill, Chaucer is well aware of the mortal danger to which men, in Diana's world, subject themselves when they enter that inviolate space. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Mary M. Innes (New York and Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1977), 3.108–259.

<sup>49</sup> Film theory works very well here to help readers characterize the distinctively "male gaze" of Palamon and Arcite, who, through a kind of "scopophilia, voyeurism, and fetishism," betray how the "male unconscious is enacted or performed upon the image/body of woman"; E. Deidre Pribam, "Spectatorship and Subjectivity," *A Companion to Film Theory*, ed. Toby Raley and Robert Stam (Malden, MA, Victoria, Australia, and Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 146–64; here 150. Even the Knight cannot keep his surveilling and voyeuristic gaze from penetrating the intimate space of Diana's altar so as to titillate his readers with hints of Emelye's washing rites at that altar: "Hir body wessh with water of a welle./ But hou she did hir ryte I dar nat telle, / But it be any thing in general; / And yet it were a game to heeren al. / ... But it is good a man been at his large" (*The Knight's Tale* [see note 2], ll. 2283–88).



must get married anyway, readers can now see that the restrictions placed upon Emelye's movement in the garden, as well as her general lack of agency and her naturalized presence or "emplacement" within the garden, contrasts with her self-fashioning at Diana's altar, as she expresses a heartfelt desire to occupy and move within much larger, wide-ranging natural spaces. This contrast suggests that courtly conventions that pave the way to a knight's all-too-expected marriage to a beautiful lady are confining – genuinely stultifying in terms of how they limit the potential of a female protagonist.

### ***The Amphitheater***

Very much unlike Chaucer's portrayal of Emelye and her interaction with space in *The Knight's Tale*, Theseus's involvement with the spaces that surround him, or that he creates, bely an assumption on Chaucer's part that, as "duc" of his kingdom (l. 2569), Theseus has the right to exert a great deal of power over the spaces that he occupies or that he wants others to occupy. Chaucer foregrounds this power during the scene that precedes the construction of the "lystes" or formal barriers that Theseus supervises, a scene that occurs within the space of the natural grove<sup>50</sup> where he finds the two knights fighting a battle to the death. Theseus requires that Palamon and Arcite cease their bloody conflict and leave the grove so that a more civilized confrontation can take place within the ceremonial arena that Theseus will build within this very grove (ll. 1706–1869). He also tells them in no uncertain terms that he will be both judge and jury in the formal battle to come (ll. 1864–69). By having Theseus assert his power in this way, Chaucer would have us believe that natural spaces are dangerous<sup>51</sup> because

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50 Joshua R. Eyler and John P. Sexton examine the inconsistencies in Chaucer's portrayals of the grove, first depicted as a natural place, then as a fighting arena, then as a burial ground after Arcite has died, concluding that this space symbolizes Theseus's lack of control over his universe; "Once More to the Grove: A Note on Symbolic Space in the 'Knight's Tale'," *The Chaucer Review* 40.4 (2006): 433–39.

51 See Anne Scott, "The Ethics of Heroism in Medieval and American Indian Tales," *American Indian and Native Mental Health Research* 3.3 (Spring 1990): 37–58, especially 44–45 for a discussion of wild spaces as dangerous and evil, rife with the psychological projections of those who inhabit them. See also Albrecht Classen, *The Forest in Medieval German Literature: Ecocritical Readings from a Historical Perspective* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), who examines Arthurian adventure, heroism, courtly love, self-orientation, and the idea of "safe havens" (among other topics) as these are enriched through an understanding of the forest setting; and Connie Scarborough's *Inscribing the Environment: Ecocritical Approaches to Medieval Spanish Literature*. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 13 (Berlin and Boston: Walter

they permit an unlicensed display of raw emotion, whereas this new and civilized arena will limit the two knights' animal-like aggression and provide for a sensible solution mediated by law and order – law and order dictated by Theseus himself.

The circular design and elaborate artifice of the ceremonial “lystes” that replace the grove almost defy description: “I dar wel seyen,” says the Knight, that such an amphitheater “in this world ther nas [was not]” (l. 1886). In addition, no one questions the design of the “noble theatre” or Theseus’s role as “master construction administrator,”<sup>52</sup> as he exerts control over every aspect of the amphitheater’s creation, including the “mete” and “wages” that he ensures his workers, i.e., those with skill in “geometrie [and] ars-metrike,” will receive (ll. 1897–1901). Whereas Emelye’s “speech acts” in her prayer create a special space for herself in her wishes and imagination only, Theseus’s own verbal commands that set the building of the amphitheater in motion, and the wealth he possesses to undergird those commands, yield an actual arena, with physical attributes that occupy real space.<sup>53</sup> Theseus, through his authoritative commands, wealth, and attention to detail, causes all aspects of the amphitheater to come into being, and when all is said and done, Theseus stands back, like God in *Genesis*, and admires his work: “Now been thise lystes maad, and Theseus, / That at his grete cost arrayed thus ... / the theatre every deel, / Whan it was doon, hym liked wonder weel.”<sup>54</sup> Such is the power that Theseus seems to wield in this tale, through a “shaping will” that allows him to create and maintain this masculine, “chivalric space.”<sup>55</sup>

The sheer number of lines to which Chaucer devotes to the foreshadowing and construction of the amphitheater also underscores the degree to which he wants us to see Theseus’s power and control over the enterprise as assumed and given. However, it is in the very nature of the “lystes” as “noble *theatre* [emphasis mine]” (l. 1885) wherein Theseus’s controlling presence is eventually questioned.

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de Gruyter, 2013), who explores medieval perceptions of wild spaces, including the desert, mountains, the forest, and the sea.

52 Margaret Hallissy, “Writing a Building: Chaucer’s Knowledge of the Construction Industry and the Language of the *Knight’s Tale*,” *The Chaucer Review* 32.3 (1998): 239–59; here 240.

53 See Scott, “Language as Convention, Language as Sociolect in *Havelok the Dane*” (see note 45) for a discussion of speech act theory as it applies to this early medieval English romance.

54 *The Knight’s Tale* (see note 2), ll. 2089–92 (... And when it was all finished, Theseus liked it marvelously well.)

55 Eyler and Sexton, “Once More to the Grove” (see note 50), 434. The authors, as do I, eventually find this “shaping will” lacking. Woods, in his introduction to *Chaucerian Spaces* (see note 24), states that Theseus’s behavior, prior to his building of the amphitheater, impresses “upon us the reach of chivalric space and his centrality to it” (3). For the space as “masculine,” see Brown, introduction to *Chaucer and the Making of Optical Space* (see note 23), 19.

As a theater, that is, “A great open-air structure or amphitheater built in a Greek or Roman style and used for dramatic presentations or spectacles,”<sup>56</sup> Chaucer reinforces the elaborate space as a place of spectacle, action, and performance. The idea of performance suggests not only scripted presentations but *ad hoc*, extemporaneous performances that come about when, as Derek Pearsall says, an “ideal code of conduct” is put “in operation,”<sup>57</sup> or, in other words, when real human beings interact with each other in a world that cannot always be scripted so as to diminish the effects that luck, emotions, and volition might have on those very actions.

The drama that unfolds, then, within this “theatre” has all the markings of a performer who, on the stage of life, acts in a manner that was not scripted for his part in this drama. The winner of the battle, Arcite, is not the winner of Emily's hand, contrary to the way in which Theseus has laid out the rules for combat and has modified those rules whereby he attempts to minimize any loss of life (ll. 1851–69 and 2536–59). Arcite, on a whim, or out of vanity, or due to the mysterious effects of a beautiful woman upon a man, or simply because he is motivated by the joy he has taken in his recent victory against Palamon within the “lystes,” looks up at Emily – a spontaneous glance or “gaze” that helps change the course of all that has been pre-planned as the consequences for this battle within the arena. A “furie infernal” sent by Pluto immediately follows upon the heels of this glance upward, which causes Arcite's horse to stumble and trip; and the new victor falls on his head and breaks his “brest ... with his sadel-bowe” (ll. 2684–91). Afterward, we watch Arcite die a slow, painful death because of his injuries, and we find Palamon, the loser in the battle, taking Arcite's place in the marriage ceremony. Despite Theseus's reasserting his control at the end of the romance by orchestrating the burial of Arcite and playing the role of theocratic ruler by marrying Palamon to Emelye (ll. 3075–82), readers cannot help feeling that the marriage is a bit like a *deus ex machina* (especially since Emelye did not really want any part of the marriage) and that all of the careful planning and meticulous construction of the amphitheater's walls, as well as the attendant rules for the actions taking place within them, have fallen short somehow.

The knights' actions within the amphitheater, including Arcite's specifically gazing at Emily, become the pragmatic expression – not linguistic, but rather kinetic and physical – of the ideal, abstract codes and behavioral guidelines set

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56 “Theatre,” *The Middle English Dictionary*, University of Michigan Digital Collections, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=byte&byte=208878409&egdisplay=compact&egs=208884774> (last accessed on July 14, 2017). Two of the supporting quotations for this entry come from *The Knight's Tale*.

57 Derek Pearsall, “Romances,” *The Canterbury Tales* (London and Boston: G. Allen & Unwin, 1985), 114.

forth by Theseus himself, a kind of physical, tactile, concrete “parole” to Theseus’s “langue.”<sup>58</sup> As such, and because this kind of “parole” has its own genuine power, the knights’ actions within the amphitheater, especially Arcite’s impulsive glance upward at Emelye, bely the assumptions we make about the received power that rulers demonstrate in making and enforcing their absolute and ideal rules, and making, or causing to be made, the edifices that are meant to house the ideal expression of those rules. In addition, the power inherent in the performative aspect of the ad-hoc events within the amphitheater gives us pause as we question Theseus’s own “attempts to accommodate and civilize the anarchic and inescapable facts of aggression, death, and love, as social life requires.”<sup>59</sup>

It is fairly easy, then, to see the amphitheater scene as very dark and doomful, a confirmation of all that is chaotic about the human condition.<sup>60</sup> In contrast to the manner in which many Middle English romances behave, the creation of the amphitheater seems to foil the happy and satisfying expectations that come about through the standard diptych structure found in those Middle English romances – a structure that usually confirms and reinforces the audience’s knowledge of, and belief in, kingly rights, knightly entitlement, and happy endings.<sup>61</sup> The elaborate amphitheater, Theseus’s micro-managed answer to the ill-defined and natural grove, provides the second half of a diptych or bi-partite structure for Palamon’s and Artite’s aggression toward one another, but it does not deliver the assumed happy results: Arcite looks at Emelye, Pagan gods meddle in the outcome of the second fight, a good knight dies, and Theseus is left consoling his people about an outcome that seems, to his people, to be senseless and tragic.<sup>62</sup> As Arcite travels from one place in the amphitheater to another, he encounters what fate, chance, and human volition have in store for him, as he rides his horse near the lovely Emelye to engage in a kind of self-actualization, only to discover (as the readers

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58 Robert Dale Parker, “Structuralism,” *How to Interpret Literature* (see note 11), 43–84; here 51: “Drawing on the terminology of the linguist Noam Chomsky, Jonathan Culler ... added the terms *competence* and *performance*, where *competence* describes the ability to process or produce language and *performance* describes the particular language we produce, such as a poem or a text message.” See also Eyler and Sexton, “Once More to the Grove” (see note 53), 435, who discuss the “lystes” as “theater” as well as the changes that Chaucer made to his source material from Boccaccio’s *Teseida*, as does Brown, “Chivalric Spaces: The Knight’s Tale” (see note 23), 230–31. 59 Barrow, “The *Canterbury Tales* I: Romance” (see note 1), 121.

60 Eyler and Sexton, “Once More to the Grove” (see note 50), 435.

61 Fewster, “Middle English Romance: Theories and Approaches” (see note 1), 14–18.

62 Fewster argues that in Middle English romance, knighthood is a given, and although knights are shown learning about chivalry as the stories progress, their receiving and gaining of land is all “sewn up in the structure and ideals of romance”; “Middle English Romance: Theories and Approaches” (see note 1), 33. This is clearly not the case in Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale* for Arcite.

do) that one's pursuit of individuality is often beset with tragic and unforeseen consequences.

Like an "establishing shot" within a film<sup>63</sup> which gradually narrows to the heart of the action taking place within a focused dramatic performance, Chaucer, as "director," has begun with the broad strokes of the amphitheater itself, moving to a key dramatic scene within it. Readers, at this point, are not even aware of the gigantic amphitheater and are instead, and solely, focused on a small, single, and unplanned act that has taken place in a specific location within this large fighting arena, and they are thus preoccupied with the impression that this small but significant act might make concerning Theseus's loss of control in the face of spontaneous events. If kings in medieval romances were perceived as "God's instrument of rule on earth,"<sup>64</sup> then readers are left wondering exactly how Theseus has fulfilled this godlike role within this well-defined space; these same readers might also determine, perhaps, that Theseus has failed his kingdom in some fashion.

While these interpretations are certainly understandable, I would like to posit a different reading of the "lystes," which sheds light on the manner in which Chaucer himself may have been presenting shifting cultural ideas of measurement and value, as writ large in the space of the amphitheater itself. As a ruler, Theseus cannot be blamed for his desire to maintain law and order, which is his way of assuring safety and peace within his kingdom – a definite hallmark of ideal rulers in many medieval romances and according to countless "mirrors for princes."<sup>65</sup> His behavior, as he sits, presumably on high,<sup>66</sup> over the arena, is part

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63 David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, "The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing," *Film Art: An Introduction*, 10th ed. (1979; New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013), 218–65; here 236.

64 Laura Ashe, "The Hero and his Realm in Medieval English Romance" *Boundaries in Medieval Romance* (see note 1), 145.

65 Mirrors for princes constituted a genre of medieval political writing designed to teach princes, kings, and other rulers the proper behavior befitting someone in a leadership position. See Mark David Luce, "Mirrors for Princes (Islamic)" and Christian Bratu, "Mirrors for Princes (Western)," *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms, Methods, Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen, 3 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter Press, 2010), 1916–49. See also Robert Rouse, "The Peace of the Roads: Authority and *auctoritas* in Medieval Romance," *Boundaries in Medieval Romance* (see note 1), 115–16.

66 Chaucer does not say exactly where Theseus sits in the amphitheater; however, prior to his arrival at the "lystes," he appears in a window of his "paleys," arrayed as "he were a god in throne [throne]" (ll. 2527–29), conveying an impression of looking down upon his subjects; in addition, his subjects arrive at, or below, that window, to do him "heigh reverence," and finally a herald, on a "scaffold," commands the attention of the people with a "Oo!" to silence them for Theseus's speech (l. 2533) – all indications that Theseus is perceived to be above his subjects, if not literally, then figuratively. In the amphitheater itself, we can assume that Theseus assumes an elevated status there, as well.

and parcel of his kingly role, with “its strange material and physical presence, [and] with the force that he himself deploys or transmits to some few others.”<sup>67</sup> However, because the very nature of the theater over which he presides showcases performances and all of the unplanned “acting” that might not be scripted by Theseus himself, then this very arena itself, as an apparently stable, fixed, and unchanging thing, is unable to circumscribe the ramifications of the unscripted actions that take place within it. In this way, the amphitheater reflects

a movement from a ‘world of fixed and absolute values to a shifting, relational world in which values were understood and determined relative to changing perspectives and conditions,’ a change from ‘a static world of numbered points and perfections to a dynamic world of ever-changing values conceived, as continua in expansion and contraction’, a world ‘newly accepting of the probable and the approximate’.<sup>68</sup>

Although this insightful statement by Carolyn Collette and Nancy Bradbury was not meant to be applied to Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale*, it is obvious, as we shall see below, that the amphitheater illustrates aspects of a fixed and static world, in addition to relational world of changing, probable, expanding, contracting, and approximate values. In doing so, the romance provides us with a unique vantage point concerning the growth, rights, and responsibilities of the individual within an evolving culture.

The Knight’s description of the amphitheater’s measurement and construction seems to embrace a worldview that blends the values of “fixed and absolute measurement” with values that are more relative or imprecise, even impossible to conceive of. This combination of absolute and imprecise measurements regarding the amphitheater provides an image of Theseus that is almost magician-like. As in Collette’s and Bradbury’s description of the “static world of numbered points,” and “in manere of compass,” Theseus (who “gooth so bisily / To maken up the lystes roially” (ll. 1883–84) has the amphitheater’s circumference carefully laid out just as one would lay out, or “fix,” the circumference of a 360-degree circle, i.e., by means of a compass.<sup>69</sup> We also know that the “circuit” or circumference of the amphitheater is a “myle” in length (l. 1887). The Knight also defines the height of the “degrees,” or tiers of seats, as “sixty pas,” i.e., pieces or units (l. 1890). So precisely are the seats laid out in a circular fashion

<sup>67</sup> Michèle Foucault, “Panopticism,” *Critical Theory: A Reader for Literary and Cultural Studies* (see note 11), 493–508; here 502.

<sup>68</sup> Collette and Bradbury, “Time, Measure, and Value in Chaucer’s Art and Chaucer’s World” (see note 9), 347.

<sup>69</sup> Hallissy, “Writing a Building: Chaucer’s Knowledge of the Construction Industry and the Language of the ‘Knight’s Tale’” (see note 52), 249. *The Knight’s Tale* (see note 2), l. 1889.

that when a man looks across the arena, "He letted nat his felawe for to see": a man was not hindered from seeing his fellow across the way (l. 1892). Given that, in the Middle Ages, "space remained a rather vague dimension,"<sup>70</sup> we find the Knight's and Theseus's attention to specific dimensions quite noteworthy. By means of these kinds of precise measurements and descriptions, both the Knight and Theseus show their allegiance to, and security derived from, a world measured in "fixed and absolute measurements," an understandable position for the Knight himself, who values the fixed, established tenets of chivalry ("Trouthe and honour, freedom and curteisie") and whose social position is so established, or fixed, within his culture that Chaucer allows the Knight inaugurate the tale-telling contest.<sup>71</sup>

By concluding "shortly" (l. 1895) that the arena was erected "in so litel space," however, the Knight seems to be fashioning a *trompe l'oeil* dependent upon more vague and illogical descriptions of space and time. Not only does it seem as if this vast arena now occupies the "litel space" or area of the grove, but "space," here, can also be defined as "time."<sup>72</sup> Thanks to this depiction of compressed time, it is as if the Knight has shown Theseus, the "master construction administrator," pulling a rabbit out of a hat: an huge amphitheater (designed for a large battle between two-hundred knights) out of an apparently smaller grove (in which Palamon and Arcite waged their personal battle with each other), in the blink of an eye, and to the wonderment of all. This is the magical power of Theseus, as he seems to manipulate both time and space during the amphitheater's creation in ways that defy precise measurements.

The measurement of the amphitheater's dimensions helps us characterize Theseus and assign a value, as well, to certain ideas, relational qualities, or human attributes that are important in his, and the Knight's, world. The amphitheater is described in precise language as a way of showing Theseus's control over its dimensions; it is also very large, just as Theseus's power is immense, almost without measure. Chaucer therefore stresses the fact that Theseus is in a class by himself: that is, he is not one of his subjects but rather over, above, or beyond them. His role in this politically elevated, even god-

<sup>70</sup> See Classen, "The Innovative Perception of Space" (see note 13), 543.

<sup>71</sup> *The General Prologue* (see note 2), ll. 43, 845.

<sup>72</sup> See bottom note to l. 1896, *The Knight's Tale* (see note 2). *The Middle English Dictionary* quotes this line specifically, in definition 8 (a), in support of the word "space" meaning "Extension, often indefinite or unspecified, in two or three dimensions, area, room" ("Space," *The Middle English Dictionary*, University of Michigan Digital Collections, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=byte&byte=188959294&egdisplay=compact&egs=189014314>; last accessed on Jul. 20, 2017).

like position is to establish the dimensions of the amphitheater as circular, its circumference as a mile long, and the height of its tiered seats as “sixty pas,” just as he enforces the “fixed and absolute values” of his world: namely, peace should be maintained at all costs, safety ensures the peace of the land, and battles should be conducted civilly by means of clear rules and regulations so as to ensure predictable, safe outcomes. These are also the uncompromising values of the Knight himself, values which he might well admire in Theseus and therefore which allow the Knight to relate to Theseus as a character, and which help connect both the Knight and Theseus in terms of their relative status and power.

This amphitheater, therefore, because of the creative, even paradoxical way that it has been measured and constructed, gives figurative dimension to Theseus’s qualities and the ideas he stands for: the arena is a larger-than-life physical manifestation of Theseus’s kingly power, which really cannot be measured precisely but which is keyed to the immense value that the Knight himself sees in Theseus – a value that is relative and relational rather than absolute; it is also a space that attempts to recreate the fixed, absolute tenets of chivalry through its precise measurements and through its capacity to house the explicit rules for combat that Theseus has articulated.

Unlike the amphitheater itself, the specific actions that take place *within* the “lystes” clearly betray an even closer allegiance to the idea of measurement being relative, relational, and approximate. The actions within the arena, in fact, illustrate a “dynamic” rather than “fixed” world built upon the relationships between human beings as they contest for the hand of a beloved. As the cosmos within the amphitheater contracts to Arcite’s glance upward toward Emelye, the whirlwind that causes his horse to stumble, and Arcite’s mortal wounds, we see, in fact, that the precise measurements of the amphitheater’s dimensions as well as the amphitheater’s representation of Theseus as absolute ruler become irrelevant within the context of the dynamic, relational conflict between his two subjects, Arcite and Palamon. The arena’s precise measurements and construction also have no effect on the unpredictable aftereffects of the battle, the unplanned effects of love upon a lover, and the value of a single life, about to be lost, that no amount of “ars-metric” can measure.

Things fixed and absolute in their perfection have now been replaced by things relational, conditional, changing, and imperfect. If the actions within the amphitheater are therefore a microcosm for an entire culture or a society, then they seem to depict an “emergent” culture or society, as Raymond Williams describes the term: that is to say, a culture that reacts against the “dominant” culture so as to oppose the values of that dominant culture, thereby asserting “new meanings and values, new practices, [and] new relationships and kinds



of relationships.”<sup>73</sup> Here, those “new” relationships might be those that do not place as much emphasis on the theocratic properties of a single ruler and his fixed and absolute rules but rather assign value to an individual’s pursuit of free will, and this individual’s interactions with others of his or her choosing, come what may.<sup>74</sup>

Romances, as a vehicle for the exploration of the individual, is not a new concept.<sup>75</sup> It is nevertheless fascinating to see how Chaucer has brought to light the differences between public images and duty (i.e., Theseus as all-powerful ruler upholding the received values of his class status), on the one hand, and individual desire on the other, with all of its accompanying messiness, all played out within an unusual display of spatial manipulations.<sup>76</sup>

### ***Linguistic Spaces***

If formal speeches and type-scenes within the tale can also be considered “spaces” of a certain kind – being demarcated from the rest of the narrative due to their specific structure, content and rhetorical aims, and conveying a sense of interiority and exteriority due to these things – then the *Knight’s Tale* also showcases several interesting examples of linguistic space that illustrate similar features to those of the physical spaces, discussed above.<sup>77</sup> Namely, they seem designed for one thing, but then seem to serve another role upon closer inspection. Laid out

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73 Raymond Williams, “Dominant, Residual, and Emergent,” *Critical Theory: A Reader for Literary and Cultural Studies* (see note 11), 463.

74 See Ashe, “The Hero and his Realm in Medieval English Romance” (see note 64), 135, for a discussion of heroism and the “discovery” of the individual.

75 Ashe, “The Hero and his Realm in Medieval English Romance” (see note 64), 135.

76 The elaborate carvings and paintings on the walls of the arena actually have forecasted this situation within the amphitheater, for what they depict are not scenes of law, order, peace, and balance, but rather strife, death, despair, deceit, murder, and mayhem. As Brown concludes, the actions that take place in the amphitheater, if they do not directly negate Theseus’s power, then they show his approach to the world as “deeply compromised” (see note 23), 26. In other words, the “emergent” culture of the individual knights and the pursuit of love might make Theseus’s worldview seem passé and old-fashioned. Phrased in a more neutral or even constructive way, however, this particular space, which seems to be designated for one function, simply performs another entirely. And that function seems to be a readerly one: namely, it sharpens our awareness of the disjuncture between what we want and what we get in life; the power that chance, luck, desire, love, and volition have in disrupting that already-uncertain pathway between desire and outcome; and finally, the fact that impulsive, precarious, unplanned, and often emotional forces cannot be controlled, dictated, or bounded by physical enclosures and spaces of any kind.

77 See the “Introduction” for further clarification of linguistic spaces.

and contextualized for a particular purpose or idea, these linguistic spaces seem either to outlive their usefulness, or to give way to other speeches and linguistic events that expand upon their content, or to reinforce their own parameters in a self-reflexive way, all the while they are straining at the seams, as it were, to convey ideas that broaden the romance's perspective on the human condition.

Linguistic structures *qua* spaces within the *Knight's Tale* are ostensibly set up in this romance to contain, limit, and otherwise provide boundaries for the human experience of grief. Egeus's speech to his grieving son Theseus provides, at first glance, a short, tightly-structured, rhetorically-balanced argument that should provide comfort to Theseus: "Right as ther dyed nevere man ... / That he ne lyved in erthe in some degree, / Right so ther lyved never man ... / In all this world, that som tyme he ne deyde" (ll. 2843–46). And then Egeus concludes, even declares, that "deeth is an ende of every worldly soore."<sup>78</sup> Egeus's speech therefore should create for Theseus a comforting space within which to acknowledge that Arcite's own sorrow has ended with his own death, and that Theseus's painful sorrow should end, too. But Theseus is still living, not dead, and he, like the members of his court, are left alive only to feel the unceasing sting and despair of that grief. Such is the magnitude of Theseus's sadness that, after choosing to locate the funeral pyre for Arcite within the grove that was his battleground with Palamon, and then laying Arcite's body on the bier, Theseus began to "weep that pitee was to heere" (2878). Egeus's well-constructed speech does not provide a comforting space within which his son can meditate on, and come to terms with, Arcite's death; instead, Theseus's grief spills over into the grove, within the narrative that follows.

Egeus's short speech, and Theseus's subsequent, but brief, course of intense weeping, then make way for two other, much longer and highly-structured segments in *The Knight's Tale*: (1) the *paralipsis* (or *occulatio*) type-scene in which two dozen trees are felled and burned for Arcite's funeral pyre (all the while the narrator states that he will not tell us about this funeral pyre or the funeral games that follow; ll. 2919–66); and (2) Theseus's lengthy and elaborate "Firste Moevere" speech, offered to his people as a carefully-reasoned explanation or

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<sup>78</sup> See *The Knight's Tale* (see note 2), 840, note to ll. 2837–52, which explains Chaucer's emendations of his source material from Boccaccio. The language and sentiment in Egeus's Boethian speech are proverbial and commonplace. See Bartlett Jere Whiting and Helen Wescott Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases: from English Writings Mainly before 1500* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), and James P. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1974), 366–72. Egeus's speech seems to illustrate features of the maxim, the comparison, and the conclusion.

*expolitio* about why we should not grieve Palamon's death.<sup>79</sup> In the first – a linguistic tour-de-force – Chaucer gives voice, through the felling, burning, and crackling of two dozen trees, to the very grief that he claims should “nat be toold” but instead knows no bounds (l. 2924 and again at l. 2963). In the “Firste Moevere” speech (ll. 2987–3074), much expanded from its conceptualization in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*,<sup>80</sup> it seems that Theseus cannot find a way to force grief to follow any logical, carefully-reasoned program of consolation. No matter how many sensible ideas and logical subdivisions he incorporates into this prolonged, highly-structured speech, and no matter that he desires to “conclude ... this longe serye [argument]” (l. 3067) and thereby help his subjects “conclude” their grief, we are still left with a palpable sense of sadness and injustice at the end. Just like the spaces of the prison, garden, and amphitheater, the tale's linguistic spaces seem ill-equipped to contain the emotional displays with which Chaucer invests or contextualizes them, or that are generated out of the spaces themselves and that therefore seem to take on an organic life of their own. It is as if the unplanned injury of Arcite has initiated a kind of “butterfly effect,”<sup>81</sup> an unpredictable course of action and emotional expression which simply cannot be contained or constrained by the speeches and tropes designed to rein them in through their structure, rhetorical characteristics, or content.

As seen in other locations in the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer does not always seem comfortable with the ramifications of emotional display: intemperate emotional states can be cause for ridicule, impatience, and apprehension.<sup>82</sup> However, the fact that strong emotions such as love, anger, and grief can destabilize Theseus's universe tells us that, all during the time that the Knight intends to “maken of [his] longe tale an end” (l. 2966); and despite the fact that the long tale is sectioned out through formal Latin subheadings,<sup>83</sup> complete with a pat conclusion of marriage to tidy up loose ends, there is, in fact, nothing decorous, formal, tidy, or structured about the human condition and the emotional states,

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79 See Burrow, “The *Canterbury Tales* I: Romance” (see note 1), 123 for a comparison of the style and rhetorical effect of Egeus's and Theseus's speeches.

80 “Boethius: from *The Consolation of Philosophy*,” *Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds* (see note 36), 289–90.

81 The term comes from the language used to predict the weather and from Quantum Physics.

82 *The Knight's Tale* (see note 2), ll. 1355–79 and 1528–39. This kind of anxious and impatient dismissal also occurs, with reference to Dorigen, in *The Franklin's Tale*. See Anne Scott, “‘Considerynge the beste on every syde’: Ethics, Empathy, and Epistemology in the *Franklin's Tale*,” *The Chaucer Review* 29.4 (1995): 390–415; here 402.

83 See the explanatory notes for *The Knight's Tale* (see note 2), 826–27 for information about Chaucer's free translation of his source material from Boccaccio. Boccaccio also divided his long tale into formal parts, or “Books.”

impulsive actions, gazes (whether planned or unplanned), perceptions, or volition that cause the characters in this romance to soar with happiness or wallow in despair. Performed or acted out within certain kinds of spaces, the characters' highly-charged behavior (both words and deeds) in the *Knight's Tale* challenge the purported nature and function of those spaces, thereby creating what Deconstructionists might call an "absence" between "signifier" and "signified,"<sup>84</sup> – or, as clarified through the context of this medieval romance, the gap between certain denoted spaces and their subsequent connotations, as shaped, defined, and deferred by the characters who inhabit them.

Therein lies an important attribute of spaces in *The Knight's Tale*: namely, the attribute of spaces to both define, confine, and delimit behavior, only to have the characters' actual behavior within those spaces disrupt our expectation for those spaces as well as our understanding of their nature and function within the tale. This attribute, which involves a character's speech within, gazes within and without, and finally movement in and traversing through, these spaces is, I believe, at the heart of Chaucer's other romances. It is this specific quality of space in his romances, as it intersects with human behavior, which invites us to read these romances not as "closed texts," as Umberto Eco says of many medieval stories, but rather "open" texts<sup>85</sup> that promote interpretations, considerations, and re-considerations of our world and our place in it. Spaces closed, then opened up or shrunk, their boundaries defined and then changed, and the attendant changes and "openness" in interpretation that these spatial alterations invite – these spatial and interpretive features exist (or are problematized) in all of Chaucer's romances, as we shall see through several brief interpretations of key scenes in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, *Franklin's Tale*, *Squire's Tale*, and *Tale of Sir Thopas*.

## The Bed as "space to speke" in the Wife of Bath's Tale

Like natural, wild spaces in the *Knight's Tale*, the uncivilized spaces in the *Wife of Bath's Tale* provide individuals an opportunity to freely express their impulses, whether for good or for ill. Therefore, as in the *Knight's Tale*, the wilderness in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, which lacks any markings of law, order, and civilization, seems to license an individual to behave in such a manner that might require that

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<sup>84</sup> Parker, "Deconstruction" (see note 11), 95.

<sup>85</sup> Umberto Eco, "I. Open," *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Text* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 47–104; and "II. Closed," 105–72.

individual to limit or modify that behavior within a more civilized space instead. The Wife begins her tale with an account of a “lusty bachelor,” a knight who, while he is “allone” and “ridynge fro [the] river” where he was apparently hunting waterfowl, rapes a maiden who had been walking in front of him (ll. 883–88). This knight, by himself and clearly in a rural and even wild area, commits a criminal and savage act, reinforced by the wild and untamed nature of his surroundings. In addition, and in a fashion similar to the amphitheater in the *Knight's Tale*, the civilized space to which the wayward knight is taken, King Arthur's court, is specified, at least for a while, as a place where, “By cours of law” and according to “the statut” of the land (ll. 892–93), this knight will need to have his behavior reined in by these very laws and statutes, not unlike the amphitheater's ostensible purpose in *The Knight's Tale*.

However, because these laws in King Arthur's court are so constricting and uncompromising; because King Arthur will require that the knight be beheaded as a result of his crime of rape; and because the Wife of Bath, as tale teller, has a different, more challenging lesson for the knight to learn, King Arthur's civilized space – his court and the values it uphold – is disbanded, as it were, to have the women of his court, including Queen Guinevere, decide the fate of the young knight and the exact space in which he needs to learn this important lesson. Importantly, this space will not be King Arthur's court at all but “every hous and place” that this knight encounters as he “wendeth forth his weye” (ll. 918–19) while on his year-long journey in order to learn what women most desire. A specific, delimited space, i.e., Arthur's court as a *locus* of learning and experience, is thrown over for a broad, unspecific location containing “every place” instead, suggesting that the space of King Arthur's court is inadequate, too limiting, for the significant lesson that the Wife of Bath wants the knight, and us, to glean from this story.

And yet, although this journey seems to take the knight to, and through, all places, the narrator settles on yet another wild, natural location, “under a forest syde” (l. 990) to underscore once more the correlation between the uncivilized expression of human desire and its negative consequences. When the knight sees more than twenty-four dancing ladies along an edge of a forest, and when he “drow ful yerne [eagerly]” to learn some “wisdom” from them (ll. 993–94), only to have them vanish and be replaced by an ugly, old woman, readers can determine that whatever “wysdom” the knight has purported to desire from the dancing ladies has actually been overshadowed by an intemperate sexual yearning again,<sup>86</sup> made manifest through his male “gaze” of the ladies that could well

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86 Carolyn Dinshaw, “‘Glose/bele chose’: The Wife of Bath and Her Glossators,” eadem, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison, WI, and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 128 makes

lead to yet another rape. As the Wife of Bath states through her narrative aside once the knight leaves King Arthur's court on his journey, "But what! He may nat do al as hym liketh" (l. 914)—he may not do whatever he likes: not by the river, or next to a forest, or in any other place for that matter. A "wyf – / A fouler wight ther may no man devyse" (ll. 998–99) who replaces the dancing ladies when they suddenly vanish, is equivalent to a cold shower on the knight's desires. After that point, he does not yearn to draw "ful neer" to her, and the tale changes course to matters having to do with the tale's exposition and transformation of male power within the realm of marriage and domesticity. To understand this change of direction, we return to the *Knight's Tale* briefly again.

At the end of the *Knight's Tale*, the story concludes with Theseus asserting his power by presiding over the marriage of Palamon and Emelye. Chaucer apparently sees the value of wrapping up that particular romance by returning to some civilized expression of order within a space designed for just that: a mighty duke's kingdom. Unlike this narrative pattern, however, the pattern employed in the *Wife of Bath's Tale* shows the knight returning to Arthur's court (only half way through the romance) to explain what women want most – "Wommen desiren to have sovereynetee / As wel over hir housbond as hir love, / And for to been in maistrie hym above" – only to have the "olde wyf" rise up from the "grene" where she was sitting, claim mastery over the knight by boasting that she gave him the answer, and then demand, publicly and in front of King Arthur, that the knight marry her, because, after all, he did "plighthe [her] his trouthe" in that forest, earlier on.<sup>87</sup> King Arthur's court, twice now, has been given over to women, or a particular woman, destabilizing this masculine realm, to which the narrator refers not just as Arthur's court but also his "hous," i.e., house, family, and household (l. 882). Not only can a brazen knight not do whatever he likes, but apparently King Arthur's "hous," namely, his very house, family, household, court, and kingdom, and all of the civility, law, and order that these represent, cannot and must not operate as the space in which the Wife of Bath's more important messages should reside or be learned.

If neither wild, natural areas in *The Wife of Bath's Tale* nor civilized kingdoms are appropriate for the exploration and growth of the individual – a theme common in many medieval romances – then we are left with a third type of space, domestic space, which, in the end, becomes the most important location for the Wife, as storyteller, to convey her thoughts about marital sovereignty and

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note of the vanishing ladies as apropos of the lesson that the knight needs to learn: perceived solely as distracting objects of sexual desire, women cannot also be seen as repositories of wisdom.

<sup>87</sup> *The Wife of Bath's Tale* (see note 2), ll. 1037–56. See also the explanatory notes for the changes that Chaucer may have made to his source material (872–73).

individual power. Within the apparently cramped and uncomfortable space of the knight's and old wife's marriage "bedde," as the knight "walweth and ... turneth to and fro" (ll. 1072, 1085), the old wife creates a much more expansive space through her speech on *gentillesse*, that is to say, a speech on virtuous character and its role within a marriage. What should normally be perceived to be as an intimate space for consummating their marriage, a bed, becomes a pulpit for the old wife to preach in a wide-ranging manner to her reluctant and recalcitrant husband about the pitfalls of being "dangerous" or stingy with one's love; the necessity of perceiving poverty, ugliness, and old age as strengths, not weaknesses; the importance of giving the old wife a way in which to fulfill the knight's "delit ... [and] "worldly appetit," as per the marriage "dette" (ll. 1217–18, 130); and finally, the husband's need to "let go of the outer, inessential things about his wife, his marriage, and ... himself."<sup>88</sup> By doing so, the marriage has a chance to become something more than a generic display of patriarchal values, and more than a generic ending to this romance, which would be the usual reassertion of a knight's acquisition of land and wealth, with a lovely lady by his side.

Through her "curtyn" lecture to her husband (l. 1249), the old wife transforms the knight's own "hous" (l. 1225), a domestic space over which the Wife of Bath herself has stated she does not have *enough* control, into a place, specifically a bed, where the old wife can voice her (and, it seems, the Wife of Bath's) concerns about the virtues necessary for a good marriage, thereby transforming her husband's bad attitude in the process and thereby asserting her power in that way. In other words, her words themselves create a new "space to speke,"<sup>89</sup> the magical, transformative power of which deemphasizes the bed as a narrow and circumscribed place where newly-married knights should be lavishing their sexual attention upon their brides (l. 1089), or where they indeed might abuse their sexual power in the way the knight did, earlier on. The transformative power of the old wife's "space to speke" also takes the emphasis off a domestic space wherein a misogynistic husband, like the Wife of Bath's fifth husband, Jankyn, reads endlessly from his "book of wikked wyves" (l. 685). Thanks to the old wife's lecture and the knight's willingness to both listen to and hear what she says, the space of the bed becomes a magical

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<sup>88</sup> Woods, "The Exile and her Kingdom" (see note 24), 117–31. Woods spends this chapter carefully defining what the Wife and Old Hag might mean by "mastery" and "sovereignty," deciding that these words do not necessarily convey the Wife's need to bully or control her husbands, but rather suggest something more modest: the right for the "wife to dance her attitudes" and express herself freely, within this domestic space (130).

<sup>89</sup> Jerry Root, "'Space to Speke': The Wife of Bath and the Discourse of Confession," *The Chaucer Review* 28.3 (1994): 252–74; here 252. Root illustrates the way in which the Wife's prologue to her tale conforms to the style of confessional manuals, but here for the purpose of self-expression and creation, not penitence.

metonymy for the domestic space of the entire household, i.e., a new and different kind of “hous” where husbands and wives might live by the law of *gentillesse*, or “virtue is as virtue does,”<sup>90</sup> paving the way for the knight’s moral and relational transformation within the marriage for, one hopes, years to come.

This would be all fine and well, if the tale were to end within this bedroom scene. It does not, however, and instead the Wife of Bath’s final words remind us, at the very end, that women are short on power, and that virtuous and egalitarian behavior are hard to come by in whatever space one occupies, whether domestic or otherwise. “Jhesu Crist” should provide “Housbondes meeke, yonge, and fresh abedde” for all wives, says the Wife of Bath, and He should also give these wives the strength “t’overbyde hem that we wed” (l. 1260). With no real power in the world at large, the Wife of Bath herself is still very much aware that her domestic power, forcefully wielded and especially within the bed, is all that she may have to carve out, for herself, a “space to speke.”

## Optical Illusions, Illusory Perceptions, and Liminal Space in *The Franklin’s Tale*

A comparison of the *Knight’s Tale* and the *Wife of Bath’s Tale* suggests that the dichotomy between wild spaces, and civilized or man-made spaces, is useful but still insufficient for Chaucer to facilitate our deeper understanding of the human condition. These two tales have also illustrated how genuinely powerful the human gaze is, i.e., the power of sight to reinforce, reflect, or change one’s perception of spaces of all kinds. In addition, the *Wife of Bath’s Tale* shows us that speaking and listening, in and of themselves, are transformative – can help redesign the purported function of a space so that this space seems to behave differently from its original description. In the *Franklin’s Tale*, two scenes containing important spaces – one, Dorigen’s complaint about the rocks off the coast of Brittany; and two, Dorigen’s and Aurelius’s emotional meeting prior to entering the garden where their adultery should take place – stress that the transformative powers of sight, of “gazing” at or within spaces, can be both a blessing and a curse. The idea of spaces operating as a kind of three-dimensional “canvas” for the projection of a character’s negative emotional states and worldview characterizes the use of spaces in *The Franklin’s Tale*.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Woods, “The Exile and her Kingdom” (see note 24), 130.

<sup>91</sup> For Chaucer’s changes to his source material, see “Chaucer’s ‘Franklin’s Tale’ and Boccaccio’s ‘Filocolo’ Reconsidered,” *The Chaucer Review* 34.1 (1999): 38–59.



Dorigen, longing for her husband Arveragus to return from his chivalric exploits, “caste hir eyen downward fro the brinke ... / [and] saugh the grisly rokkes blake” off the coast of Brittany, eventually pleading with God to wipe out this wild and uncivilized place (ll. 858–59, 891–92). As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>92</sup> Dorigen’s viewing of the rocks causes, as well as reflects, both her emotional apprehension and annoyance, with Dorigen’s use of the word “annoyen” betraying not just that the rocks “cause harm,” a common medieval definition of the word, but that they also distress and bother, or irritate, her. Unable to distance herself emotionally from the rocks, her visual experience of the rocks becomes laced with “bittre peyenes smerte,” “foul confusion,” and great “feere” (ll. 870, 869, 893). Constrained by a “subjectivist” epistemology,<sup>93</sup> she rejects any scholastic or religious understanding of God’s “fair creacion” and instead, with great vehemence, “wolde God that alle thise rokkes blake / Were sonken into helle for his [Arveragus’s] sake! / Thise rokkes sleen [her] herte for the feere.” (ll. 870, 891–93). This willful plea betrays not so much that the rocks should disappear for her *husband’s* sake but rather that they should vanish for *her* sake, for they nearly kill her with fear.

Ironically, these very rocks – their massive, immoveable presence – are a source of comfort for her, as well. Being attuned to the physical world around her<sup>94</sup> and taking stock of her world through her five senses, she expects that these rocks will stay put and not change. To have them move or disappear would be akin to having the sky fall down and, as for Chicken Little, a source of great consternation. This is why she feels she can utter the rash promise to her love-sick suiter, Aurelius, without any belief whatsoever that the rocks will actually disappear: “whan ye han maad the coost so clene / Of rokkes that ther nys no stoon ysene, / Thanne wol I love how best of any man” (ll. 995–97). According to Dorigen’s sense-bound world, there is no way possible that these rocks will budge an inch, implying that there is no way that Aurelius will be able to fulfill this rash promise.

The subjective and sensory qualities of Dorigen’s worldview, her way of knowing her world, leaves her susceptible to visual tricks, optical illusions that can take advantage of the way in which her faculty of sight and her emotions are, in effect, married to her physical surroundings. When Aurelius, with the help of a magician and his use of “magyk natureel,” finally succeeds in accomplishing Dorigen’s impossible task such that “It semed that all the rokkes were awaye,”

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<sup>92</sup> Scott, “‘Considerynge the beste on every syde’” (see note 82).

<sup>93</sup> See Scott, “‘Considerynge the beste on every syde’” (see note 82), 399–404, for a discussion of this kind of “subjectivist” knowing.

<sup>94</sup> Scott, “‘Considerynge the beste on every syde’” (see note 82), 399–400.

Dorigen's astonished response betrays the fact that she could not have possibly conceived of being tricked in this manner, for "It is agayns the proces of nature" (ll. 1125, 1296, 1345) – against the way that her natural world has operated and how she has perceived it forever. Anticipating John Donne's "A Valediction forbidding mourning," within which appears the poet's well-known and dismissive characterization of "Dull sublunary lovers['] love / (Whose soule is sense)," Dorigen's own sense-bound perceptions of the world "cannot admit / Absence, because it [i.e., her husband's absence] doth remove / Those [sensory, physical] things which elemented it."<sup>95</sup> In other words, she cannot tolerate the absence of her husband or the rocks, because when those physical "elements" disappear, she is at a loss to console herself in her husband's absence, or to explain or take consolation in the fact that, the rocks' disappearance is due to a perceptual trick only. She is, like Donne's earth-bound lovers, subject (metaphorically speaking) to the "sublunary" pull and sway of the very tides that end up covering the rocks themselves.

The fact that the rocks disappear through Aurelius's and the magician's agency, and not Dorigen's, also tells us about the inadequacies of a woman's words to shape her spaces, her surroundings, in a manner that might suit her. Dorigen's forceful plea that God sink the rocks into hell so that her husband can come home safely is no less potent than Emelye's plea with Diana, at her altar in the *Knight's Tale*, to run wild and free in the woods, unmarried. Here, Dorigen does not want to be free of marriage or her husband, but she does want him to come home, wants to be free of her worry and distress, and wants the rocks to sink into Hell (as well as reappear, after the magician's tricks) for these reasons. However, the word "want" here takes on its other connotation of "lack," as well. For as much as she wants to have control over the spaces (i.e., world, conditions, and expectations) that govern her life, she lacks the power to do so on her own.<sup>96</sup> It takes Aurelius, the knight who lusts after her, to act out Dorigen's volition and physically to alter the coastline of Brittany, to sink the rocks with the magician's

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<sup>95</sup> "A Valediction forbidding mourning," *The Complete English Poems: John Donne*, ed. Constantinos Apostolos Patrides (New York, London, and Toronto: Knopf, 1991, 1985), ll. 13–16. I also discuss this poem in "Lodestone and Litmus Test: Aqueous Presentations of Emotional Experience in Medieval and Renaissance Literature," *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: Explorations of Textual Presentations of Filth and Water*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 19 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 370–73.

<sup>96</sup> For the view that Dorigen "manipulates as a tool the rocks she has inscribed, and uses them to assert her will," see "What of Dorigen? Agency and Ambivalence in the 'Franklin's Tale'," *The Chaucer Review* 31.4 (1997): 365–78; here 374.

help, but for a price: the fulfillment of her rash promise. Theseus, in the *Knight's Tale*, can certainly shape, and literally shapes, his physical surroundings; and with the help of the magician, Aurelius in the *Franklin's Tale* can do so, as well. This ability to shape spaces seems to fall, within these two romances, within the purview of the male characters more than female ones.

The *Franklin's Tale* manages to find a way around Dorigen's "subjectivist" perceptions of space by the end of the tale. In a wonderful twist, it is Aurelius's behavior once again that harnesses the combined transformative power of gazes, speaking, and listening to shape spaces and one's expectations for them. Using the conventions of magic typical of a Breton *lai*, just as *The Wife of Bath's Tale* does, to predispose the audience to find some kind of magical solution to love's woes by the time the tale ends, Chaucer shows us the magician's "magyk naturel" being supplanted by moral and relational magic at the tale's end, which takes place on a street, prior to the "gardyn" where Aurelius and Dorigen first met, where she uttered her rash promise, and where the adultery should be occurring. Rather than conversing within the garden itself, a space that conveys ideas of illicit love and temptation, Aurelius and Dorigen meet outside the "gardyn" space (l. 1504). The fact that they meet by accident within this liminal space<sup>97</sup> between Dorigen's "[h]oom" (l. 1460) and the garden, while Dorigen makes her way sorrowfully to that garden, suggests that all kinds of things might occur here and that the behavior that is conducted within this liminal space is not constrained by the expectations that one might have, say, for wild, natural spaces, or public, civil spaces, or even domestic spaces such as we find them illustrated in Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *Tale*.

Within this liminal space, a carefully-constructed exchange occurs that will make good on the Franklin's promising narrative aside that precedes this conversation: "She [Dorigen] may have bettre fortune than yow semeth" (l. 1497). Aurelius, who is accustomed to spying on Dorigen when she leaves her home, greets Dorigen in a friendly and anticipatory manner as she wends her way to the garden. Rather than returning the friendly greeting, she "answerde, half as she were mad," that she was going to the garden, as her husband has asked her to do, in order to fulfill her promise, "allas, allas!" (ll. 1511–13). This pronounced

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97 Steele Nowlin, "Between Precedent and Possibility: Liminality, Historicity, and Narrative in Chaucer's *The Franklin's Tale*," *Studies in Philology* 103.1 (Winter 2006): 47–67, has also explored the idea of liminality in *The Franklin's Tale*, stating that "liminality is a space in which cultural paradigms can be engaged, explained, and re-conceived" (49). Unlike Nowlin, I am taking the idea of liminal space and contextualizing it with reference to the many other types of spaces in Chaucer's romances, and the way that spatial configurations can change over the course of the tales' narratives.

discrepancy in their styles of greeting, which Aurelius both sees and hears, causes him to “wondren” about this situation. The wondering then moves his heart to “compassioun” and “greet routhe.” And this compassionate empathy then prompts him to release Dorigen from her rash promise and to therefore do a “gentil dede” by “Considerynge the beste on every syde.”<sup>98</sup>

This motivation to perform the best kind of *gentillesse*, within this liminal space, is initiated through the faculties of hearing and seeing – but, more importantly, the kind of “seeing” that then becomes heart-felt perception: “That sith I se his [Arveragus’s] grete gentillesse / To yow, and eek I se wel youre distresse [emphasis mine]” (ll. 1527–28), says Aurelius, then he can surely conduct himself virtuously, as well. In this liminal space that is neither “hous” nor “gardyn,” listening becomes a kind of careful hearing and understanding, and seeing becomes a form of clear, well-informed perception. As a result, the characters do not enter the “gardyn,” the marriage is preserved, Aurelius has done a “gentil dede,” and, to complete the chain reaction of behavioral and ethical transformations, the magician, as well, releases Aurelius of his debt of one-thousand pounds.

This tale’s focus not just on sight but also on hearing might well have to do with Chaucer’s increasing skepticism, as Suzanne Akbari states, of “vision as the highest of the senses, one which accurately conveys reality, seamlessly mediating between the seer and the object.”<sup>99</sup> In this tale, however, hearing complements seeing, rather than replacing it, and when combined with Aurelius’s and Dorigen’s movement toward one another in this liminal space, these faculties of perception produce noticeable salutary effects that help transform this space into something optimistic, rather than darkly fateful and pessimistic. Even if, as J. A. Burrow claims, the “reciprocal nobility” of this tale aligns it with the “generous and humane spirit which marks the best medieval courtly writing”<sup>100</sup> and therefore may not make the tale unique in that way, Chaucer, by invoking this message of “humane spirit” within the shifting ground of liminal space near the end of the tale, suggests that self-exploration and growth, while tenuous and tentative, can lead to hopeful possibilities for human relationships.

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<sup>98</sup> *The Franklin’s Tale* (see note 2), ll. 1514, 1543, 1521; and Scott, ““Considerynge the beste on every syde”” (see note 82), 404–10. Aurelius demonstrates the best qualities of a “constructivist knower,” someone who constructs his knowledge base from a variety of sources, enriching his perspective on the situation (409).

<sup>99</sup> Akbari, “Chaucer’s Dream Visions” (see note 42), 178.

<sup>100</sup> Burrow, “The *Canterbury Tales* I: Romance” (see note 1), 119–20.

## Chaucer's Romance Fragments: Failures of Open and Closed Spaces

The fragmentary nature of the *Squire's Tale* and the *Tale of Sir Thopas* may not be conducive, at first glance, to our analysis of spaces in Chaucer's romances; however, the very manner in which spaces operate in these tales actually help us understand their fragmentary nature as well as decide whether Chaucer may have left them unfinished due to the way that spaces in these tales might have limited the tales' narrative potential, in full expression of the romance genre as Chaucer may have wanted to conceive it. Spaces that seem too "closed" or defined help characterize the *Squire's Tale's* fragment, while spaces that seem too "open" and ill-defined are a feature of Chaucer the Pilgrim's own fragmentary tale, the *Tale of Sir Thopas*.

### *The Squire's Tale*

Like the *Franklin's Tale* that follows it, the *Squire's Tale* lends credence to the idea that emotions color wild spaces, and that empathic seeing and hearing can transform spaces, and even cause some spaces to come into being. In fact, this characterization of spaces may well have paved the way for their fuller delineation in the *Franklin's Tale*. Unlike the *Franklin's Tale*, however, the *Squire's Tale* betrays a more pessimistic view of both sights and sounds as a means by which to assess, accurately, the way that the world truly works. Chaucer seems to assuage this discomfort with deceptive auditory and visual information at the end of the fragment by means of the creation of a very small and contained space indeed: a bird's "mewe" (l. 643).

Prior to this description of the mew, the tale shows Canacee simply walking, with her new-found powers of hearing animals speak, in a "park" (l. 392), accompanied by only a few of her entourage. Like Dorigen's walking but not reaching the garden itself, Canacee's own walking takes place within a liminal space, neither here nor there, simply on a "trench" or path within the park (l. 392). Therefore, the liminal space in which Canacee conducts her early-morning walk might suggest potent and hopeful possibilities for relational transformation, such as we have seen in the *Franklin's Tale*. In this wild area separate from her father King Cambuskyan's court, while she "was pleying in hir walk," the narrator suggests that Canacee first hears, and then sees, a female peregrine falcon crying and harming herself with her beak: "Ther sat a faucon over hire heed ful hye, / That with a pitous voys ... gan to

crye ... / Ybeten hadde she herself ... pitously" (ll. 410–14). Exemplifying the best of the "humane spirit" that we found within the last scene of the *Franklin's Tale*, Canacee goes off the park's path, walks over to the tree, puts the injured bird in her "lappe" (l. 475) after the falcon has fainted from its branches, and then both listens to, and watches, the falcon tell her piteous tale of love gone wrong: namely, the deceit of her peregrine lover and his hurtful dissimulations. The visual and auditory input that Canacee receives through the female falcon's retelling of this story lodges in her heart, and because "pitee renneth soone [quickly] in gentil herte" (l. 479), Canacee is deeply affected by the bird's plight and resolves to do something about it. As Canacee sits there, with the bird nestled in her lap and off the beaten path, we come to understand that her attentive behavior within this liminal park space is transforming it into a space no bigger than a lap, wherein intimate compassion acquires a physical, tactile dimension, full-bodied and received through, and given by, seeing, hearing, and touching.

It is important to understand, however, that the very nature of the deceit that the female falcon experiences causes Canacee to take further, more definitive action on behalf of the bird. The female falcon makes it crystal clear, through the iterative quality of her story, that her peregrine lover has betrayed her by counterfeiting his words to her as well as his looks and behavior (l. 554), leading the female falcon to be deceived both by what she has heard him say as well as by how he has portrayed himself to her, through his outward appearance. When the female falcon reaches the point in her story when her lover claims, in feigned sadness, that he must leave her, she explains, "So sorwefully ... I wende [believed] verrailly / That he had felt as muche harm as I, / Whan that I herde hym *speke* and *saugh* his hewe [emphasis mine]" (ll. 585–87). Earlier in her narrative, as well, the female falcon has conveyed the disappointment that she has experienced when the peregrine lover seemed "so wrapped under humble cheere, / And under hewe of trouthe in swich manere ... / That no wight [person] koude han wend [believed] he koude feyne [pretend]" (ll. 507–10).

The female falcon has not only been tricked by her lover's words, but she has fallen for his false "hewe," his false "coloures" (l. 511) as well, suggesting his deceptive outward appearance and behavior, too. This is a deep betrayal, a manipulation of both the visual and auditory faculties, which has forced the female falcon, a very emblem of quick movement, agile motion, and keen-sightedness, to become mired in her own narrative, to become stuck and imprisoned within her repeated accounts of her lovers' deceit. Whereas Akbari has stated that Chaucer, in his later allegories, comes to embrace hearing, more than sight, as a faculty apprehending the truth of things, here, in this romance at least, we find that both faculties of sight and hearing are faulty and therefore subject to being deceived,

leaving one with not much faith in either one,<sup>101</sup> and putting one at the mercy others' volition, movement, and agency.

So damaging is the nature of this betrayal that it subsequently motivates Canacee to create a space more ironclad than her lap, one designed to protect the female falcon from further encroachments on her fragile heart. By her bed, Canacee makes a mew

And covered it with veluettes blewe,  
In signe of trouthe that is in wommen sene.  
And al withoute, the mewe is peynted grene,  
In which were peynted all thise false fowles  
As ben thise tidyves [small birds], tercelettes, and owles;  
Right for despit were peynted hem bisyde,  
Pyes [magpies], on hem for to crie and chide. (ll. 644–50)

In all respects, this description of the mew attempts to control how we process both language and images: it restricts our interpretation of this protective space to a carefully-worded depiction of the mew's external decorations and colors. It is here where the female falcon can both heal and, apparently, live out her days. The liminal space of the park and "trench," where Canacee went freely to "pleye" and "walke," and where the possibilities of human expression and relationships might have seemed endless, have now subsided in their importance, being replaced by this little space designed for convalescing and, it seems, living.

In this way, Chaucer offers a clear but problematic corrective to the blatant deceit described by the female falcon earlier – a dark and uncompromising understanding of what is needed to protect women against the untrustworthy behavior of their male lovers: namely, a small, well-built, well-"signed" little room in which women can live safely apart from the vagaries and vicissitudes of male lust: protected but confined indefinitely, taken out of circulation from the world at large and having their very nature curtailed. At this point in the *Squire's Tale*, there really is no other "place" – and no other narrative direction – that the tale can describe, create, or pursue, and therefore the Squire is left at the end of this mew-building scene, providing his readers with a rough and incomplete outline of what is to follow. Given the uncompromising message at the end of

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**101** Akbari, "Chaucer's Dream Visions" (see note 42), 178. Akbari also notes that in "the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer finds a way to take into account the position, both physical and spiritual, of the view. He enables the reader to see from the perspective of the teller, and thus to receive a picture of the world that does not pretend to be true or sufficient, but merely an accurate rendering of what it looks like from one point of view. By means of the verbal exchange of storytelling, the hearer or reader accumulates many of these perspectives, finding in each of them much that is 'fals' and much that is 'soth'" (232–33).

this fragment, and the spatial configurations reinforcing that message, it is no wonder that Chaucer abandoned the tale for the *Franklin's Tale*, which is more multivariate in its treatment of space, which, in turn, leads to a more enriched understanding of the tale's significance.

### *The Tale of Sir Thopas*

Chaucer's parodic attempt to provide us with his own version of a tail-rhyme romance,<sup>102</sup> the *Tale of Sir Thopas*, draws our attention, through antithesis, to the manner in which spaces of all kinds have been so terribly important to the structural, thematic, character, and rhetorical development of his other romances. It is not that the *Tale of Sir Thopas* lacks spaces: there are a great many spaces, places, and locations within this tale, crammed into just a couple of hundred of lines. Some even appear to function in an expected manner, based on what we have learned from Chaucer's other romances. The force of Chaucer's parody, however, comes in large measure from the way in which Sir Thopas interacts with these spaces, and from the way in which the description of the spaces is at odds with the behavior taking place within them. The parody of this tail-rhyme romance also inheres in some of the tale's vague spatial attributes and functions. The end result is that spaces in this romance do not seem to be an agent for transformation, or cannot be transformed themselves, through anything like the meaningful techniques that Chaucer employs in his other romances.

Granted, some spaces and spatial contiguities in this romance do seem to lend structure to the romance and to help characterize Sir Thopas as a knight. Unable to find his desired fairy queen "In towne," Sir Thopas continues to ride his "steede gray" through the "fair forest" until he comes to "The countree of Fairye / So wilde" (ll. 793, 751, 754, 802–03). Wild spaces are designed to enhance or invite knightly adventures, as we have learned by reading Chaucer's other romances, and Sir Thopas intends to have an adventure in this very wilderness. Moreover, because he is a "knight auntrous [adventurous], / He nolde [does not desire to] slepen in noon hous, / But ligen [would rather lie] in his hood" (ll. 909–11), the hood itself becoming the barest covering for his body. He also moves between the forest and "towne" in order to arm himself for a subsequent battle with the "Olif-aunt."<sup>103</sup> These spaces, and this movement between spaces, seem fairly standard

<sup>102</sup> In "Reading the Forms of *Sir Thopas*, *The Chaucer Review* 47.4 (2013): 416–38, Jessica Brantley tries to get at the heart of Chaucer's parody of this tail-rhyme form, which she says is not unique to medieval romances (435).

<sup>103</sup> Elephant. *The Tale of Sir Thopas* (see note 2), l. 808.



fare in a medieval romance and do not seem to complicate or derail its plot in any way. And therein lies the problem with these spatial depictions so far: there is, in fact, nothing complicated, challenging, or particularly meaningful about how these spaces are being utilized in this romance. The forest/town dichotomy has not yielded any interesting information about Sir Thopas in the way that dichotomous or contiguous spaces in *The Knight's Tale*, *Wife of Bath's Tale*, *Squire's Tale*, or even *Franklin's Tale* have. Aside from structuring this romance in a simplistic way and giving us the skeletal information that we need to know about Sir Thopas' knightly behavior, these spaces do not seem to serve an important thematic or character function.

The same can be said for other spaces in this romance: Sir Thopas is born "in fer contree / In Flaundes, al biyonde the see, / At Poperyng, in the place" (ll. 718–20). As Albrecht Classen has noted, we should not usually expect to find a lot of detail about how spaces are characterized in medieval literature,<sup>104</sup> and yet this description seems mostly suited to fill out the "aabaab" rhyme scheme only, the redundant "in the place" (which merely means "right there") providing the rhyme for "Goddess grace" at the end of the stanza. Chaucer's use of redundant and alliterative doublets, in addition, dampens any meaningful qualities to the spaces that Thopas occupies: he travels "by dale [valley] and eek by downe [hill]," over "stile [fence] and stone," and over "hill and dale" (ll. 796, 798, 836), the redundant and repetitious qualities of which seem to mirror the repetitious, even boring nature of his journey, as he "riden and goon" (l. 800). Purposeful action, as we have discovered in Chaucer's other romances, help transform spaces, or at least help spaces within these romances acquire particular, and useful, functions. However, like Calegronenant in Chrétien's *Yvain*,<sup>105</sup> Sir Thopas intends to ride out in search of adventure simply for the sake of doing so – i.e., he "wolden out ride" (l. 750) – without having a sense of purpose to that adventure, at least in the first portion of the tale; and this lack of purpose therefore does not help to define the parameters and functions of the spaces that he inhabits.

Without this initial defining purpose for his journey, the forest in which Sir Thopas finds himself does not seem to take on the characteristics of Sir Thopas's mindset or his volition, unlike the ways in which spaces in the *Knight's Tale*, *Wife of Bath's Tale*, *Franklin's Tale*, and *Squire's Tale* seem to reflect, and are shaped by, the characters' desires, perceptions, impulses, and beliefs. If the "fair forest" in the *Tale of Sir Thopas* is supposed to mirror Sir Thopas's urgent, fiery desire as he "priketh north and est," and "pryked as he were wood [crazy]," and finally

<sup>104</sup> Classen, "The Innovative Perception of Space" (see note 13).

<sup>105</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain, or the Knight with the Lion* (see note 38), 6.

collapses for weariness of “prikyng,”<sup>106</sup> we are hard-pressed to forge that particular correlation through the actual forest descriptors that Chaucer provides for us. This particular forest – which is inhabited by “many a wilde best [beast]” but also “bothe bukke and hare,” “herbes grete and smale,” as well as singing “briddees ... / The sparhawk and the papejay ... / The thrustelcok ... [and] / The wodedowve” – ironically seems better suited for a peaceful, late afternoon nap on the “softe gras” than for an arduous journey wherein Sir Thopas spurs on his horse, ever faster, for the sake of some ill-defined adventure, only for the exhausted knight to collapse on that soft grass and fret some more (ll. 756–71).

This ironic use of space, fostered through the discrepancies between Sir Thopas’s frantic behavior and mindset, on the one hand, and the joyful and peaceful forest sights, smells, and sounds on the other, continues when Sir Thopas seems to finally gain some purpose to his journey, only to have this purpose undercut by the manner in which he has acquired it. Pursuing his fitful dream of an “elf-queene [who] shal [his] lemman [mistress] be,” Sir Thopas travels to the land of fairy where he meets the giant “Olifaunt” in order to do battle with him, in celebration of “paramour and jolitee” (ll. 785–88, 843). Now, in Chaucer’s other romances, we have found that gazes have the capacity to penetrate spaces, to change characters’ perceptions of spaces, and to help project a character’s mindset upon those spaces. Here, however, having never laid eyes on any fairy queen, Sir Thopas merely dreams of seeing a fairy queen whom he is determined to have, as his sweetheart or mistress. Lodged in his dream, this vague notion of the fairy queen has not been received by Sir Thopas through any active gazing or through any genuine optical power whereby Sir Thopas’s “soul knows the object.”<sup>107</sup>

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**106** *The Tale of Sir Thopas* (see note 2), ll. 754, 757, 754, 779. “Prikyng” in these passages means “urging” or “goading” his horse to go fast. In the broader context of Sir Thopas’s subsequent love-longing, however, and once all of the “prikyng” has been described, it is tempting for readers to return to these passages and thereby see the act of “prikyng” as something sexual instead, in the same way that we see the word “priketh” used crudely in *The Reeve’s Tale* to characterize the clerk’s, John’s, intercourse with the Symkyn the Miller’s wife (*The Reeve’s Tale* [see note 2], l. 4231). Because Sir Thopas hasn’t even seen the “elf-queene” except in his dreams, he certainly has not had any sexual encounter with her, so any kind of sexual “prikyng” here seems rather futile, and therefore parodic.

**107** Akbari, “Chaucer’s Dream Visions” (see note 42), 178. Dreams in the Middle Ages could certainly be interpreted as prophetic, but even if this is a prophetic dream, it has foreshadowed the wrong kind of love and lover. Sir Thopas’s dream prophesies that an “elf-queene” shall be his “lemman” or mistress, her role as “lemman” seemingly no more refined than the “lemman” that Nicholas, in the *Miller’s Tale*, wants in the person of Alison, the frisky fabliau wife who has a “likorous ye [lecherous, wandering eye]” (*The Miller’s Tale*, *The Canterbury Tales: Complete*

A genuine visual apprehension of a beautiful queen, in other words, has not shaped Sir Thopas's behavior or mediated his spatial environment whatsoever. In fact, we know nothing about the fairy queen from Sir Thopas's dream, apart from the fact that he "shal" have her. In this regard, his dream of the "elf-queene" is perhaps just as selfish as January's nocturnal visions (in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*) of the delectable young girls he hopes to choose from, for marriage – dreams which the narrator deems to be no better than the "Heigh fantasye and curious bisynesse" (l. 1577) that preoccupy January's days and call attention to his increasing foolishness. Like January's lust-filled dreams, Sir Thopas's dream of the fairy queen seems to be fairly vacuous: it has not originated with any "raw data" by which his imagination, his "celle fantastik," might convert it into a genuine image, to be formed, subsequently, into a meaningful idea.<sup>108</sup> Worse, Thopas's overactive imagination, which seems to thrust the image of the fairy queen into his dream unannounced, seems to "supplant the dispensations of *prudence*," so that Sir Thopas's actions now "lack moral significance."<sup>109</sup> As Sir Thopas rides his trusty steed over all points of the compass, up and down, over hill and dale, through the forest, to "towne," and perhaps back again, the reader gets the distinct impression that Sir Thopas's goal of finding an "elf-queene" as his "lemman" has no greater moral or relational significance within this forest space than his meandering movements through it. By extension, the forest, as a space that might reinforce the considerable significance of Sir Thopas's actions, beliefs, or desires, is found lacking as well.

Chaucer, in the end, might have found the pleonasm and doublets, which are standard stylistic features of the tail-rhyme romance, insufficient for his attempts to describe spaces in this tale. In addition, he does not appear to have been able to work within the stanzaic structure of the tail-rhyme form in a way that would be conducive to describing the complex spaces that appear, fully realized, in his other romances. In particular, the themes in tail-rhyme romances that often appear in the "tail" portion of the stanzas, i.e., in the short, monometer portion of the stanza, are not themes at all in Chaucer's version of the tail-rhyme romance but rather vague references to even vaguer spaces: "In towne," or "So

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[see note 2], ll. 3278, 3244). The linguistic register for the word "lemman" is more informal and colloquial – more appropriate for Chaucer's bawdy tales.

**108** I address these ideas of medieval scholastic philosophy in "Considerynge the beste on every syde" (see note 82), 405–406 as they are formulated by Alexander Broadie, *Notion and Object: Aspects of Late Medieval Epistemology* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) and J. David Burnley, *Chaucer's Language and the Philosophers' Tradition* (Cambridge and Ipswich: D. S. Brewer, 1979).

**109** Burnley, as quoted in Scott, "Considerynge the beste on every syde" (see note 108), 405.

wilde" (ll. 793, 803). Finally, the "bumptious"<sup>110</sup> rhythm and choppy stanzaic structure of the tail-rhyme romance may have thwarted Chaucer's attempt to establish a genuine narrative rhythm, a rhythm comprised of spaces defined and redefined, spaces expanding and contracting, and characters responding to their spatial environment in a meaningful way.

## Conclusion

This study of spaces within Chaucer's romances allows us to access these five tales in a manner that might well tie them to Chaucer's spatial configurations and delimitations in his other tales and poems. In addition, "space" as an identifying feature of medieval romance might well give scholars another criterion with which to characterize the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, Marie de France, Sir Thomas Malory, and the *Pearl* poet. Each of these authors has structured their various romance narratives around characters who engage with the spaces in which they find themselves, challenging the parameters of these spaces, moving through them, and transforming those spaces (as well as their, and our, perceptions of them) with their words, gazes, and deeds. Chrétien's *Erec and Enid* takes its substance from Erec's travel up and down "hills and slopes, through forests, plains, and streams," "charming towns," kingdoms, churches, and open fields as he proves himself a worthy knight in King Arthur's court.<sup>111</sup> Marie de France's Lanval travels between "the city," where King Arthur resides, and a marvelous meadow where he meets a beautiful fairy queen in her regal tent, a journey and encounter that leaves his mind amazed and his sense of reality, and vision, disturbed. That journey then paves the way for his movement out, and away from, King Arthur's court forever,<sup>112</sup> an indictment, perhaps, of the less-than-regal generosity that Arthur has shown this loyal knight. In Malory's "Book VII" of *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Beaumains cannot earn the respect he desires from King Arthur's knights, nor can he achieve the title of Sir Gareth until he leaves Arthur's court and begins to master the world outside this court with his deeds of valor. This world, full of wild spaces, rivers, meadows, dykes, and dangerous passages, must be traversed by Gareth on foot or by horse as he becomes a good

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<sup>110</sup> Brantley, "Reading the Forms of *Sir Thopas*" (see note 102), 421.

<sup>111</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, "Erec and Enid," *Arthurian Romances*, trans. W. W. Comfort (London, Melbourne, and Toronto: Dutton, 1975), 30–31.

<sup>112</sup> "Lanval," *The Lais of Marie de France*, trans. Robert Hanning and Joan Ferrante (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1978), 105–25; here 106–10.

knight and worthy husband. As Gareth “travails” for his lady through one kind of space or another, we come to understand that his *travails* are inextricably linked to his *travels* through these spaces, and also bound up in the way that his “gaze” at the “fair lady Dame Lyonesse” transforms these spaces into proving grounds for his prowess and maturity.<sup>113</sup> Finally, as I have argued elsewhere, the painfully cold, wet, and wintry landscape through which Sir Gawain must travel mirrors the emotional turmoil and fear he experiences as he leaves King Arthur’s court behind to seek out, and participate in, the beheading contest initiated by the Green Knight one year prior.<sup>114</sup> In order for readers to fully understand how the genre of medieval romance is constructed, and how characterization and themes within the medieval romance take shape, it is necessary, I believe, to analyze the spatial dimensions in these romances as they intersect with human behavior.

In the case of the *Knight’s Tale*, *Wife of Bath’s Tale*, *Franklin’s Tale*, *Squire’s Tale*, and *The Tale of Sir Thopas*, an analysis of space has helped sharpen our awareness of human relationships and potential as Chaucer has conceived of these things, as well as the manner in, and degree to, which power can be wielded by his male and female characters to shape their surroundings. Combined with the forces of happenstance, words and deeds, sights and sounds, wishes and desires, perceptions, and movement, the spaces in Chaucer’s romances acquire an experimental quality: they become places, areas, and locations which license Chaucer’s narrators and characters, and perhaps even Chaucer himself, to push the limits of their understanding about what it means to be free, what it means to be confined, and what it takes to maintain and occupy a viable space – relational, political, personal, and public – in their respective worlds.

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<sup>113</sup> Sir Thomas Malory, “Book VII,” *Le Morte D’Arthur*, ed. Janet Cohen, vol. 1 (1969; Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, and NY: Penguin, 1983), 231–302; here 266, 263.

<sup>114</sup> Scott, “Lodestone and Litmus Test” (see note 96), 380–81.

Gavin Fort

## “Make a Pilgrimage for Me”: The Role of Place in Late Medieval Proxy Pilgrimage

When the German Dominican Felix Fabri (d. 1502) and his companions climbed a mountain near a cave where Christ fasted (Matt. 4), they noticed that one pilgrim, a monk and priest, almost died because he wore a mail shirt underneath his pilgrimage garb, which he failed to keep hidden from the others, despite his best efforts. Fabri marveled at the pilgrim’s devotion and noticed that the pilgrim’s pious example moved him more than being in such a holy place because “examples move men more than words, and words move them more than places.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Fabri continued this logic in a startling statement:

Good and simple Christians believe that if they were at the places where the Lord Jesus wrought the work of our redemption, they would derive much devotion from them; but I say to these men of a truth that meditation about these places, and listening to descriptions of them, is more efficacious than the actual seeing and kissing of them. Unless a pilgrim hath before his eyes some living example of devotion, the place helps him little in the matter of true holiness.<sup>2</sup>

Here, in a detailed account of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Fabri crafted a gradation of devotional efficacy that locates the power of place as the least effective; examples lead to greater devotion than words, and words more than places. In other words, even if one does not have an example of holiness, like a mail-clad

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<sup>1</sup> Felix Fabri, *The Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society, 9 (London: The Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society, 1897), 2.1:60. For more on this work, see Albrecht Classen, “Encounters Between East and West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Many Untold Stories About Connections and Contacts, Understanding and Misunderstanding; Also an Introduction,” *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 14 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 1–222, esp. 93–119. Most recently, the last volume of a new edition with a French translation appeared in print: Felix Fabri, *Les Errances de frère Félix, pèlerin en Terre sainte, en Arabie et en Égypte*. Introduction générale et édition critique par Jean Meyers. Traduction et notes par Jean Meyers et Michel Tarayte. 6 vols. Textes Littéraires du Moyen Âge, 25, 26, 31, 32, 40, 41 (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013–2017). See the review by Albrecht Classen in *Mediaevistik* 31 (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> Fabri, *The Wanderings* (see note 1).

pilgrim, before his eyes, meditation about holy places, or simply hearing about them, leads to greater devotion than physically experiencing them.

That Fabri favored alternative approaches to physical pilgrimage is made clear in his work on the subject, *Die Sionpilger*.<sup>3</sup> Even though he made two pilgrimages to the Holy Land himself, Fabri understood that the nuns under his care near Ulm, Germany, wanted to complete pilgrimages while maintaining their enclosure – and he obliged to help. Such desire was a common feature of late medieval monasticism. Kathryn Rudy and Daniel Connolly have shown the importance of mental and virtual pilgrimages for nuns in the Low Countries and monks in England, respectively.<sup>4</sup> For those bound by *stabilitas loci*, they had to resort to a *peregrinatio in stabilitate*.<sup>5</sup> Monastics had both the skills – the interior, meditative discipline – and the need – restrictions on leaving the monastery – to benefit from virtual pilgrimage. This was not limited to those in the monastic estate, however, as Leigh Ann Craig has argued that English laywomen – those with the need but, perhaps, lacked the skills – could complete a pilgrimage in a range of ways.<sup>6</sup> Thus, for Fabri, and many others at this time, the ancient attachment between a place and its spiritual power was beginning to unravel. At the same time, these alternatives to physical pilgrimage questioned the linkage between physical effort and spiritual reward.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, the growing number of “little Jerusalems,” prayer labyrinths, and replicas of holy sites popping up all over Europe at the end of the Middle Ages not only demonstrates the increased popularity of alternative pilgrimages

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3 On this work and its use, see Kathryn Beebe, “Reading Mental Pilgrimage in Context, The Imaginary Pilgrims and Real Travels of Felix Fabri’s *Die Sionpilger*,” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 25 (2008): 39–70; Kathryn Beebe, *Pilgrim and Preacher: The Audiences and Observant Spirituality of Friar Felix Fabri (1437/8–1502)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Albrecht Classen, “Imaginary Experience of the Divine: Felix Fabri’s *Sionpilger* – Late-Medieval Pilgrimage Literature as a Window into Religious Mentality,” *Studies in Spirituality* 15 (2005): 109–28.

4 Kathryn Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent: Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages*, *Disciplina Monastica*, 8 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Daniel Connolly, “Imagined Pilgrimage in the Itinerary Maps of Matthew Paris,” *The Art Bulletin* 81.4 (1999): 598–622.

5 Connolly, “Imagine Pilgrimage” (see note 4), 598, attributes this phrase to Jean Leclercq.

6 Leigh Ann Craig, *Wandering Women and Holy Matrons: Women as Pilgrims in the Later Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), esp. 221–60.

7 Simon Coleman and John Elsner have already argued in *Pilgrimage: Past and Present in World Religions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 213, that virtual pilgrimages will only continue to grow in popularity given the rise of filming pilgrimage sites and shrines. By all accounts, virtual pilgrimages of the digital era have ushered in a host of virtual benefits to believers in the twenty-first century as indulgences have been given out, as recently as 2013, to those who watch the pope on television or even follow the pope’s Twitter feed, see [www.news.va/en/news/papal-indulgences-for-world-youth-day](http://www.news.va/en/news/papal-indulgences-for-world-youth-day) (last accessed on Aug. 22, 2017).

but also the lingering importance of the connection – even as a representation – between a particular place and its semantic association with spiritual power. Such a connection also informed the late medieval practice of proxy pilgrimage, where one person went on a pilgrimage for another person, who received the spiritual benefit. Often conducted with some of the same motivations as virtual pilgrimages – that is, to acquire indulgences – proxy pilgrimages maintained the connection between a place and its spiritual importance because the proxy pilgrim still visited sacred sites. As with virtual pilgrims, those who requested proxy pilgrimages received spiritual benefit without physical travel. Even so, in both instances, the importance of place was never supplanted by stationary meditation – as much as Fabri might have wanted.

This article examines the survival of the importance of place in alternative pilgrimage practices, especially those practices, like proxy pilgrimage, that would suggest that late medieval Europeans rejected that the experience of a place possessed any meaning. While studies of and theories about medieval pilgrimage have begun to notice such alternative methods, our models of pilgrimage must explain the persistence of the importance of place in these alternatives.<sup>8</sup> This article offers three contributions to this end. First, I outline the push and pull between spirit and body in arguments for and against pilgrimage to illustrate the rise of virtual and proxy pilgrimage in the late Middle Ages. Such a tension did

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<sup>8</sup> Scholarship on this topic has increased in recent years: Annette Lermack, “Spiritual Pilgrimage in the *Psalter of Bonne of Luxembourg*,” *The Art, Science, and Technology of Medieval Travel*, ed. Robert Bork and Andrea Kann, 97–111 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Katherine J. Lewis, “Pilgrimage and the Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England,” *Pilgrimage Explored*, ed. Jennifer Stopford (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1999), 145–60; Colin Morris, “Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages,” *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan*, ed. Colin Morris and Peter Roberts, 141–63 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), here 159–63; Robert Ousterhout, “The Church of Santo Stefano: A ‘Jerusalem’ in Bologna,” *Gesta* 20.2 (1981): 311–21; Liliana Sikorska, “Internal Exile: Dorothea of Montau’s Inward Journey,” *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 38 (2002): 433–44; and Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), 200–01. On labyrinths, see Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990). For those who could not travel at all, certain written texts could provide a vicarious experience of a place. Most notably, perhaps, was *The Stations of Rome*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, Early English Text Society, 25 (London: Early English Text Society, 1867). But there were also similar texts from St. Trond and Oxford; on which, see Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 300–01; and Craig, *Wandering Women*, 242 and n. 79. On the phenomenon of reading as physical movement, see Katharine Breen, *Imagining an English Reading Public, 1150–1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), esp. 122–71; Connolly, “Imagined Pilgrimage” (see note 4); and Kathryn Rudy, “A Guide to Mental Pilgrimage: Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal MS 212,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 63.4 (2000): 494–515.



not, however, disrupt the primacy of place. Using a recent work on the epistemology of religious place, I offer some suggestions to explain this. Second, I describe the phenomenon of proxy pilgrimage in late medieval England, and detail the three most common motivations for this practice. Third, I analyze the geographical distribution of requests – noticing the places proxy pilgrims visited – in order to show that, contrary to Felix Fabri, place was sometimes more important than the journey. Such an emphasis on the destination in proxy pilgrimage reveals the role of place in crafting a shared, pilgrim identity – even vicariously.

## Spirit, Body, and Place in Medieval Pilgrimage

Virtual and proxy pilgrimage represent two poles of alternative pilgrimage practices in the late Middle Ages. While this article focuses on the latter only, it is important to see the common influences behind these two approaches. Pilgrimage, of all types, has always had embedded within itself a tension between the spirit and the body. Is the benefit of the pilgrimage dependent on the spiritual state of the pilgrim or on the pilgrim’s physical endurance of the journey and experience at a particular place?

In the Christian tradition, this tension existed from an early period. On the one hand, in the early Middle Ages, pilgrimage became a type of penance, which emphasized the role of the body and its suffering in bringing benefit to the pilgrim.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, church authorities worried that pilgrimage (whether the devotional or penitential variety) would descend into abuse because travel encourages sin. The Council of Châlon (813) issued a canon denouncing sins committed by pilgrims from a wide social swath: clergy, laity, potentates, beggars, and wanderers.<sup>10</sup> Clearly none of these people, according to the council, had heeded Jerome’s much

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<sup>9</sup> The early medieval penitentials list pilgrimage as a type of penitential exile akin to ancient forms of ostracism, which were employed for serious and scandalous offenses. “Perpetual pilgrimage,” the term used most often to denote this phenomenon, signified both a unit of time (i.e., for the rest of one’s life) and a mode of travel (i.e., to perpetually be a pilgrim and never stay in one place), though some people could be given a “perpetual pilgrimage” of three or seven years, after which time they could rejoin their communities. See the term’s various uses: *P. Cummean*, 2.7, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principal Libri Poenitentiales*, trans. John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938) [hereafter *MHP*], 103; *P. Cummean*, 4.6, *MHP*, 107; *The Synod of the Grove of Victory* (c. 500–525), 6, *MHP*, 172; *P. Theodori*, 2.16, *MHP*, 186; and *Irish Canons from a Worcester Collection* (c. 1000), 3, *MHP*, 425–26.

<sup>10</sup> Council of Châlon (813), c. 45, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova, et amplissima collectio*, ed. G. D. Mansi (Paris, 1901–1927; Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1961), 14:102–03.

earlier encouragement to a man who had never been to Jerusalem: “It is not to have seen Jerusalem, but to have lived well in Jerusalem, that is laudable.”<sup>11</sup> Both the council’s critique and Jerome’s words were incorporated into Burchard of Worms and Ivo of Chartres’s later law codes warning the church about the potential pitfalls of travel while on a pilgrimage.<sup>12</sup> According to this line of reasoning, because pilgrimage offers many dangers and opportunities to sin, the bodily act of travel matters less than the pilgrim’s right spiritual orientation in his own place.

These denouncements were later picked up by those who criticized the primacy of the body in pilgrimage. William Thorpe, a Wycliffite interrogated in 1407 for preaching against pilgrimage, argued:

Pilgrimage is more for the help of [pilgrims’] bodies than for the help of their souls, more for to have riches and prosperity in this world than to be enriched with virtues in their souls, more for to have here worldly or fleshly friendship than to have friendship with God or of his saints in heaven.<sup>13</sup>

To prove his point, Thorpe argued that most pilgrims lack knowledge of the Ten Commandments, the Pater Noster, or the Creed, and spend their money on taverns and unclean women when they should be giving that money to the poor. In his response, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Arundel (d. 1414), commented that Thorpe “does not consider the great travail of pilgrims, and therefore you blame that thing that is praiseworthy.”<sup>14</sup> Almost six hundred years after the Council of Châlon, a figure of church authority now *promoted* the body in pilgrimage as a way to enhance the spiritual benefits of the journey.

The endurance of the importance of the body in pilgrimage was due in part to the continued connection between pilgrimage and penance. Indeed, Raymond of

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**11** *Ibid.*, 103: *Non Hierosolymam vidisse, sed Hierosolymis bene vixisse, laudandum est*. Jerome’s comment is found in a letter to a priest, Paulinus: Jerome, *Letter 58*, 2, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 24:529; trans. in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Church*, second series, 6:119. Interestingly, Jerome had originally written *fuisse* which the council updated to *vidisse*, clearly from a later viewpoint when fewer and fewer people had even visited Jerusalem. The small change also reflects the perspective of a culture that predominantly interacted with Jerusalem from a distance rather than as a lived reality.

**12** Burchard, *Decretum*, 19.51, *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1844–1864), [hereafter *PL*] 140:995; and Ivo of Chartres, *Decretum*, 15.65, *PL*, 141:877. Gratian, *Decretum*, C. 12, q. 2, c. 71, *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, ed. A. Freidberg, *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1879; Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1959), 1:10–711, does include Jerome’s letter, but does not copy the council’s critique of pilgrimage.

**13** “The Testimony of William Thorpe,” *Two Wycliffite Texts*, ed. Anne Hudson, 24–93, EETS, 301 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), here 63, lines 1286–93 (language modernized).

**14** “The Testimony of William Thorpe,” 64–5, lines 1333–34 (language modernized).

Peñafort, in his work on penance (ca. 1232) included the affliction of pilgrimage (*afflictione peregrinationis*) as one type of scourge (*flagellum*) that was a subset of the acceptable penitential satisfaction of fasting.<sup>15</sup> For those following this line of reasoning, the benefit of pilgrimage depended on the bodily suffering of the pilgrim.

Around the same time, James of Vitry (d. 1240), the celebrated theologian and later cardinal, preached a sermon intended for lay men and women in which he argued that pilgrimage only makes sense as a bodily experience with the potential for great suffering: “A true pilgrim is perfectly purified through the labor of pilgrimage.” Such labor, James clarified, is the ideal countermeasure to sin: “For just as a person sinned with all his members, so he makes satisfaction by laboring with all his members.”<sup>16</sup> For James, pilgrimage could be both expiatory and exemplary, as he also equated the pilgrim’s journey with Christ’s journey to the cross.<sup>17</sup> In either case, the purpose of a pilgrimage centered on the body.

Not only was the body important during the pilgrim’s journey, but the desire to access the power embedded in a sacred place depended on the body’s presence in that space. Most notably, in 1414, Margery Kempe’s experience in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, offers a powerful rebuttal to those who would promote the benefits of meditative pilgrimage, like Felix Fabri:

Then [Margery and her companions] went to the [Church of the Holy Sepulchre] in Jerusalem, [and] the friars lifted up a cross and led the pilgrims around from one place to another where our Lord had suffered His pains and His Passion. And, as they went around, at all times the friars told them what our Lord suffered in every place. And [Margery] wept and sobbed so plentifully as though she had seen our Lord with her physical eye, suffering His Passion at that time .... And when they came up on to the Mount of Calvary [i.e., an outcrop inside the church on which Christ was said to have been crucified], she fell down ... for in that city of her soul she saw truly and freshly how our Lord was crucified.<sup>18</sup>

Margery predated Felix Fabri by at least a generation, and it is possible to read Fabri’s dismissal of a physical pilgrimage as a response to pilgrims like Margery

15 Raymond of Peñafort, *Summa de paenitentia*, ed. Xaverio Ochoa and Aloisio Diez (Rome: Commentarium pro religiosis, 1976), 3.34.40, 838–39.

16 The Latin is found in Debra J. Birch, “Medieval Pilgrimage: With Particular Reference to Rome in the Period from Paschal II to Innocent III (1099–1216),” Ph.D. diss., Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1994, appendix A, 324–62; here 331: *Ita verus peregrinus ex labore peregrinationis perfecte pergatur [sc. purgatur]*; and 332–333: *Nam sicut omnibus membris homo peccavit ita cunctis membris [sc. membris] laborando satisfacit*. Translations are my own. For more on these sermons, see Debra J. Birch, “Jacques de Vitry and the Ideology of Pilgrimage,” *Pilgrimage Explored*, ed. Jennifer Stopford (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1999), 79–94.

17 Birch, “Medieval Pilgrimage” (see note 16). appendix A, 335.

18 *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. Anthony Bale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 64. See also the contribution to this volume by Lia Ross.

and their emotional connection to a particular place. Embedded in the numerous critiques of Margery's physical piety that fill her *Book*, we find a rejection of the linkage between physical place and spiritual devotion that Fabri later spun into a variant brand of piety. For Margery, and perhaps many more like her, the fusion of physical presence and religious devotion resulted in intensely emotional and spiritually beneficial experiences.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the fact that Fabri's admonition of virtual pilgrimage was the result of a widening rupture of a rooted spatial and spiritual geography, the seeds of his ideas had been planted in earlier monastic environments. In these places, the tension between spirit and body, and the criticisms of pilgrimage it generated, often manifested in the religious dichotomy of interior and exterior, which was a growing concern since the twelfth century.<sup>20</sup> For example, Bernard of Clairvaux refused to force an English monk to fulfill his crusader vow because the monk's "feet already stand in the atrium of Jerusalem ... . And this, if you are willing to perceive it, is Clairvaux. She herself is Jerusalem."<sup>21</sup> For monastics ruled by a vow of stability, pilgrimage did not have to be an exterior, bodily exercise in which a monk could succumb to the temptations of the flesh en route. Rather, the interior, spiritual visualization of pilgrimage could transform any space into the desired pilgrimage place. Felix Fabri's argument at the beginning of this article – that hearing about a holy place is more efficacious than visiting it – would later become the lay analogue to Bernard's monastic mechanism of pilgrimage without travel.

For those living a regulated life in the late Middle Ages, however, it was not enough to follow Bernard's advice and feel confident that one's feet stand in the monastery-cum-Jerusalem. Rather, as Kathryn Rudy has argued about women in the Low Countries, the devotee heightened her experience of bodily movement as a surrogate for traveling to a particular place. In these virtual pilgrimages par excellence, a woman would move around her enclosed, *Ersatz* Jerusalem just as she would travel to and experience the Holy Land itself. These women viewed pilgrimage not as a metaphor, but as a bodily exercise of physical transportation to be experienced "not just with the imagination, but with the eyes, the hands, and the feet."<sup>22</sup> These virtual pilgrimages that blended spirit and body possessed

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<sup>19</sup> See the contribution to the present volume by Lia Ross.

<sup>20</sup> See Giles Constable, "Opposition to Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages," *Studia Gratiana* 19 (1976): 123–46.

<sup>21</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistola* 64, *PL*, 182:169D: *stantes sunt jam pedes eius in atriis Jerusalem ... . Et, si vultis scire, Clara-Vallis est. Ipsa est Jerusalem.*

<sup>22</sup> Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages* (see note 4), 21.

a devotional telos, whether the procurement of an indulgence or the imitation of Christ.

By contrast, proxy pilgrimage favored the body over the spirit, especially a body in a particular (holy) place. For example, as early as 1317, Gilbert Ruseel requested a “man to make a pilgrimage for me” to various English and French pilgrimage sites.<sup>23</sup> And as late as 1531, on the eve of major changes in English religious culture, Edmund Tayler left 10s. to a man who “in my name will visit the holy blood of Christ near Hailes for the purpose of a pilgrimage.”<sup>24</sup> That a proxy pilgrim was the medium through whom spiritual benefit transferred to another did not strike people as strange as long as he or she visited the desired location. Nor did it matter whether the requester of a proxy pilgrimage was in the right spiritual state. While often empathetic and showing a relational matrix of spiritual care, proxy pilgrimages also functioned in a late medieval spiritual economy flush with functional approaches to paying off sin, like purgatory and indulgences.<sup>25</sup> Such matter-of-fact exchange between the requester and the proxy, in addition to the fungibility of a person’s sin, gave proxy pilgrimage its spiritual and social power. Although the proxy element deserves a study unto itself, this article focuses on the maintenance of the importance of place in these pilgrimages.

And so, by the late Middle Ages, the debate over the role of the spirit and the body in pilgrimage was still fraught with disagreement. The rise of alternative pilgrimage practices, like virtual and proxy pilgrimages, offered pilgrims the chance to direct their spirits and transport their bodies without the hardship of physical travel. Although it would seem that virtual pilgrims favored the spirit and internal orientation over the body and external suffering, these practices often maintained a connection with physical effort and place precisely as a means to substitute physical travel with virtual travel. Likewise, while those who requested proxy pilgrims might seem to have favored the body – albeit another’s – over their own spiritual state, these practices required the proxies to earn spiritual merit for others. This suggests that there was a fusion of body and place (however

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<sup>23</sup> *Bridgwater Borough Archives, 1200–1377*, ed. Thomas Bruce Dilks (Frome: Somerset Record Society, 1933), no. 80, 59: “I leave to a man to make a pilgrimage for me to St. James and to Rocamadour 40s. ... I leave to a man to make a pilgrimage for me to Bromholm, Walsingham, and Canterbury, 10s.”

<sup>24</sup> *Wells Wills, 1528–1536*, ed. F. W. Weaver (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1890), 100: *Cuidam qui nomine meo visitabit causa peregrinationis sanctum Christi sanguinem apud Hayles 10s.*

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Thomas Aquinas’s defense of sharing indulgences with others in *Summa Theologiae, supplementum tertiae partis*, Q. 71, a. 10, *Opera omnia* (Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1906), 12:157; trans. in *The “Summa Theologica” of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1917), 3:4:64.

defined) for pilgrims even as they practiced alternative pilgrimage types that did not require travel to a particular place. To embody the pilgrimage journey, even in a virtual setting or through a proxy, stood in for the journey to a place. Neither Wycliffite heresy nor Fabri's aural mimicry could fully dislodge the importance of place in late medieval pilgrimage practice.

To help explain the maintenance of place in late medieval pilgrimage, even for those who did not travel to a particular place, I turn to a recent philosophical exploration of religious ideas about place. In a chapter on pilgrimage, the epistemologist Mark Wynn attempts to explain the religious causes of pilgrimage against its more modern objections – that it is superstitious, a non-rational experience, or absurd because God (if he exists) does not need to be sought in one place.<sup>26</sup>

First, Wynn argues that pilgrimage to a place should not be thought as superstitious because there is a material connection either with the post-mortem body (being a re-presentation of the living body) or the living history of that place. Just as atheists might visit their loved ones in a cemetery, so pilgrims seek a connection with the saintly dead. Second, he argues that pilgrimage should be explained as pilgrims having an attachment to a religious tradition rather than as pilgrims having an emotional response in a particular place. Pilgrims seek out this common, group identity, and “situate themselves by embodied gesture within a particular faith community.”<sup>27</sup> Third, Wynn addresses the disjunction between pilgrimage – as a means to localize divine power – and Christian teaching – which argues that God is everywhere. After briefly recapitulating his previous arguments that pilgrimage presents the meanings associated with a place rather than its metaphysical realities, he then answers this disjunction with another Christian idea: the church as the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12–31; Eph. 4:1–16). Even if God is omnipresent, Wynn says, Christians still claim that he is more present in the church because it is made up of bodies that have chosen to follow him. Further, the meanings associated with a place can be individuals or their bodies (“correlative chunks of the material universe”) since they were part of the church body and thus part of God's presence in the world. In the end, Wynn argues that pilgrims: (1) “encounter the significance of certain people or places”; (2) “achieve an embodied rather than purely mental directedness to God”; and (3) “enact microcosmically, and so participate in, the Christian story.”<sup>28</sup>

These explanations of pilgrimage, albeit inadequate in some respects, can help explain alternative pilgrimage practices in the late Middle Ages. Virtual

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<sup>26</sup> Mark R. Wynn, *Faith and Place: An Essay in Embodied Religious Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 137–72.

<sup>27</sup> Wynn, *Faith and Place*, 160.

<sup>28</sup> Wynn, *Faith and Place*, 172.

pilgrimages entail the bodily engagement with another body or place with the aim of connecting the pilgrim with the meanings of that body or place. The virtual pilgrim tries to locate her body, through spiritual means, in physical proximity with a particular person or place. Her localized but embodied efforts attempt to experience the divine. And her bodily movements merge with those of physical pilgrims in order to participate in the Christian community. Proxy pilgrims, as explored below, can be described likewise. Such conclusions help explain the range of alternative pilgrimage practices in the late Middle Ages. While pilgrims were undoubtedly motivated by the desire to gain indulgences and devotionally imitate Christ's life and passion, the persistence of pilgrims' embodied techniques and pursuit of place can also be explained by their desire to physically experience the meanings of a place, whether it was proximity to a post-mortem body or participating in a living tradition.

## Proxy Pilgrimage in Late Medieval England

The centrality of the importance of place, and the relational aspects that Wynn describes, underscored perhaps the most peculiar variant of late medieval pilgrimage: proxy pilgrimage. In the last centuries of the Middle Ages, individuals sent proxies on pilgrimage for three main reasons: to complete a pilgrimage vow, to have a priest-pilgrim say mass in Rome, or to obtain an indulgence. Keeping in mind Wynn's assertions that pilgrimage can be explained as a means to both experience the significance of certain people and places and connect with the broader tradition of Christian history, the reasons for proxy pilgrimage resonate with a sharper emotional edge.

Although this was a wider phenomenon, I present here evidence from England alone.<sup>29</sup> After examining 35 edited collections of wills – in addition to archival sources in East Anglia; papal, royal, and episcopal registers; and personal letter collections – numerous requests for proxy pilgrimage appeared between 1230 and 1537.<sup>30</sup> While wills proffer a written record of the testator's request for various things to be completed after his or her death, there is no

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<sup>29</sup> A short overview of continental evidence can be found in Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?: Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 422–23.

<sup>30</sup> For a full list, and a digital visualization, of the evidence touched on here, see [www.gavinfort.com/proxypilgrimage](http://www.gavinfort.com/proxypilgrimage) (last accessed on Aug. 22, 2017).

simple way to test whether those requests were indeed carried to completion.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, wills are useful in showing the hopes and fears of those preparing for a good death and, hopefully, an eternal life. While the preamble of the will demonstrates the vertical relationship with God, Christ, Mary, and the saints, the remainder of the document shows, in vivid detail, how these men and women lived in a horizontal religious community with others – even, as Wynn suggests, after their death. A proxy pilgrimage request was an expression of the search for eternal security, parallel to local masses, alms, prayers, and donations. Proxy pilgrimage was unique, however, because it was the only option that required not only direct representation – one person for another – but also direct representation in a particular place.

A request for a proxy pilgrimage to fulfill an uncompleted pilgrimage vow rested on the theological discourse surrounding vows of all kinds, including chastity, marriage, ordination, entrance into religious life, fasts, and vigils.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, much of this theorizing about vows in general informed the completion of pilgrimage vows by a proxy, which was first examined by Peter the Chanter at the end of the twelfth century.<sup>33</sup>

It is clear from the will evidence that testators viewed unfulfilled vows like any other debt that ought to be settled by family members. The first example of proxy pilgrimage of any kind that I have discovered, in fact, falls into this category. In 1230, Bartholomew de Legh, perhaps a knight, asked that his son, Galfrius, “complete the way of St. James” if he cannot – meaning that the son ought to make a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, in north-west Spain, on his

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**31** Wills are notoriously difficult documents with which to work. See Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (orig. published as *L'Homme devant la mort*, 1977; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 188–91; Michael M. Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England: From the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to the End of the Thirteenth Century* (Toronto: PIMS, 1963); Clive Burgess, “Late Medieval Wills and Pious Convention: Testamentary Evidence Reconsidered,” *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England*, ed. Michael A. Hicks (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990), 14–33; and Andrew D. Brown, *Popular Piety in Late Medieval England: The Diocese of Salisbury, 1250–1550* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 20–21. Discussions of intestacy can be found in: Raymond of Peñafort, *Summa de paenitentia*, 1.16, 432–40; and *Decretales Gregorii IX*, 3.27.1, *Decretalium Collectiones*, ed. A. Friedberg, *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1879; rpt. Graz: Akademische Druck-und. Verlagsanstalt, 1959), 2:546–47.

**32** Peter the Chanter, *Summa de Sacramentis et Animae Consiliis. Secunda pars: Tractatus de paenitentia et excommunication*, ed. Jean-Albert Dugauquier (Leuven: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1954–1967), [hereafter SSAC] vol. 3.2a, c. 4, 189–94, and c. 6, 200–15; and Raymond of Peñafort, *Summa de paenitentia*, 1.8.2–3, 340–42.

**33** Peter the Chanter, SSAC, vol. 2, 1.109, 186, lines 70–8. See also “*De eo qui recipit in se onus penitentiae alterius*,” *A Formulary of the Papal Penitentiary in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. Henry C. Lea (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Co., 1892), CLXXI, 161.



behalf.<sup>34</sup> Four other fathers asked their sons to fulfill their vows, and one particularly negligent son passed this on to his wife when he died.<sup>35</sup> On the whole, this was a close family affair in which parents and children care for each other.<sup>36</sup> Choosing a dependable proxy to complete one's uncompleted vow was an important decision because negligence could easily infect any family member. Indeed, two men, in 1529 and 1530 in Kent, both left numerous pilgrimage requests in their wills for the pilgrimage vows of others that they had not completed.<sup>37</sup>

Often, a testator requested a proxy pilgrim to complete his vow even though his vow had already been commuted. The clearest case of this is a London couple, William and Alice Cressewyc, who in 1391 appealed to the pope to have their pilgrimage vows commuted due to their old age. Strangely, the Cressewycs had already been absolved from their vows by two different papal legates, and they had already sent two men to Jerusalem and Rome on their behalf to fulfill their

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34 *Formulare Anglicanum: Or, a Collection of Ancient Charters and Instruments of Divers Kinds*, ed. Thomas Madox (London: J. Tonson & R. Knaplock, 1702), 423–24: "Et si ipse viam Sancti Jacobi, quam vovit, perficere nequiverit, ponit pro se Galfridum filium cum tanto amicorum suorum succursum, et providencia exequutorum, quod viam honorabiliter perficere possit."

35 *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, ed. H. E. Salter, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), no. 142, 136; *Testamenta Karleolensia: The Series of Wills from the Pre-Reformation Registers of the Bishops of Carlisle, 1353–1386*, ed. R. S. Ferguson (Kendal: T. Wilson, 1893), no. 35, 36; *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439–1474. Part 2: 1461–1474*, ed. Peter Northeast (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), [hereafter *Sudbury 2*], no. 414, 244; and R. M. Serjeantson and H. Isham Longden, "The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire: Their Dedications, Altars, Images and Lights," *The Archaeological Journal* 70, 2nd series (1913): 20:217–453; here 262. For the father to son to wife requests, see *The Register of Henry Chichele, 1414–1443*, ed. E. F. Jacob (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), 2:385 and 2:539.

36 There is only one instance when a mother asked her daughter, and only one instance where a mother asked her son: *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439–1474. Part 1: 1439–1461*, ed. Peter Northeast (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001), [hereafter *Sudbury 1*], no. 175, 65–6; and *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland, 1198–1484*, 14 vols. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1893–1960) [hereafter *CPapReg*], 2:308. Wives were requested five times to help out their husbands and in one case the husband's will made this a prerequisite for the woman to inherit his goods and rents from lands: *Reg. Henry Chichele*, 2:539; *Sudbury 1*, no. 1207, 412–13; *Somerset Medieval Wills, 1501–1530*, ed. F. W. Weaver (London: Somerset Record Society, 1903), 173–74; and *Testamenta Eboracensia*, ed. J. Raine and J. W. Clay, vol. 5 (London: J. B. Nichols & Son, 1884), no. 77, 95. Brothers and cousins were sometimes also called upon: *Sudbury 2*, no. 508, 302; and *Norfolk Archaeology* (Norwich: Charles Musket, 1847–), 4:338.

37 "The Parish Churches of West Kent," *Transactions of the St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society* (London: Alabaster, Passmore, and Sons, 1895), 3:253. Both listed here. Completing a proxy pilgrimage for vow completion was memorably mocked by Desiderius Erasmus, *Peregrinatio religionis ergo, The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 621–74; here 623, lines 9–39, and 650, lines 13–22.

vows. Despite all this work, their request states that in order to “tranquilize their consciences” they wanted the pope’s final word on the matter. The pope ordered them to donate the same amount of money as their pilgrimages would have cost to the repair of the churches of Rome.<sup>38</sup> This aging couple was concerned, above all, about uncompleted pilgrimage vows, as no other penitential acts were listed in their request for papal commutation.

A proxy pilgrimage for the completion of a vow did not appear to assuage the consciences of many individuals, but rather seemed to weigh on them like a financial burden. This type of proxy pilgrimage was not something that generated immense spiritual rewards; rather, as a type of palliative geriatric care, it was something that added to the general peace of those approaching death. It was as if testators were crafting their arguments to be given in front of the eternal judge so that they could say with confidence, “I did what I could.”

One of the more interesting aspects of proxy pilgrimage was the phenomenon of asking a priest to go to a specific place, usually Rome, in order to say masses for the testator’s soul. A typical request asked for a chaplain to say mass in Rome, with little embellishment, often in addition to asking for local masses as well. The occurrence was frequent enough to assume that proxy pilgrimage was always a clerical responsibility, but this was not the case. While priests make up about twenty percent of the total number of proxy pilgrim requests in late medieval English wills, there is no indication that they had a monopoly on the practice. There was also a marked similarity between a priest-pilgrim – who traveled to a particular place to say mass – and a chantry priest who said mass without traveling.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, many testators conflated the two practices.<sup>40</sup> However, most testators required both elements – priest and pilgrim – and it is important to see that they were meant to work together. For example, in 1432, Thomas Polton, the

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**38** *CPapReg*, 4:389.

**39** Kathleen L. Wood-Legh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965). For a helpful map of some of these chantries, see Brown, *Popular Piety*, 98–9.

**40** Compare these two requests from a father and son. *Sudbury* 1, no. 20, 10: In 1439, Thomas Grene stated: “I bequeath the stipend of a chaplain to go on a pilgrimage to the court of Rome, or the stipend of two chaplains if possible, for me and my friends, and the stipend of a chaplain to celebrate for my soul, for four years after my decease, in diverse places according to the discretion of my attorneys.” *Sudbury* 2, no. 89, 53: In 1462, William Grene, Thomas’s son, likewise left instructions that a “suitable priest go to Rome immediately after my death, and to stay there until he has well and truly completed the stations and to pray there for my soul and my parents’ [souls].” But William promptly added: “And a pilgrim to go to the tomb of St. James in Compostela.” The proximity of these two requests to each other in the will suggests that William saw the proxy pilgrim doing similar work to the priest-pilgrim. Both travel to a sacred place in order to acquire merit for the testator and his family.

bishop of Worcester, asked for a chaplain to go to Rome for two years and continuously visit the stations, the diverse holy places, and the saints' relics in addition to celebrating mass in the more devout places as he saw fit. While the chaplain's two-year stay in Rome was no doubt quite luxurious, the bishop required that he split his time between priestly duties and pilgrim activities.<sup>41</sup> Priests, no doubt, were well equipped to do this kind of work – not least because they could leave their jobs for extended periods of time without fear of losing income or fear of, say, missing the harvest or a shipment of goods – but the ability to transfer the merits and benefits they earned was not always dependent on one's spiritual station.<sup>42</sup>

Some testators opted for more clarity on the issue by sending *both* a priest *and* a lay pilgrim on their behalf, perhaps fearing that one person could not sufficiently embody both roles or desiring that one would check up on the other.<sup>43</sup> There is also evidence to suggest that Rome was the preferred destination for priest-pilgrims but that Compostela attracted lay proxy pilgrims.<sup>44</sup> Thus, requests for a priest-pilgrim had two requirements – a priest to say mass and a pilgrim to travel and earn merit – which needed to be embodied in one person. Since wills routinely contained requests for priests to say mass in the testator's local church, testators who asked for a priest-pilgrim combined the benefits of a pilgrimage with those of a mass.<sup>45</sup>

The largest share of requests for a proxy pilgrim in late medieval English wills neither specify the completion of a vow nor ask for a priest-pilgrim. Rather, pilgrimage and its attendant acts were of primary concern. Between 1317 and 1531,

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<sup>41</sup> *Reg. Henry Chichele*, 2:488,

<sup>42</sup> On the unique ability of priests to fund their own travel see, for example, that in 1406, the parson of a church in Ireland received permission from King Henry IV to go on pilgrimage to Rome while still receiving "all profits from his church"; *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1891–1978), Henry IV, 3:85.

<sup>43</sup> *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, AD 1258–AD 1688*, ed. Reginald R. Sharpe (London: John C. Francis, 1889–1890), [hereafter *Husting*] 2:98; and Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch [hereafter *SROI*], HD 2448/1/1/353, [*SROB* Baldwin 35v], William Herman of Rykyngghale Superior. All records cited from *SROI* fall under the "HD ..." designation, which refer to the personal notes of Peter Northeast, the editor of *Sudbury 1* & 2, housed in the Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch. His notes contain handwritten copies of wills from all Suffolk record offices from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries; that is, outside the range of his edited collection. I also give his reference to the specific will collection in square brackets, often beginning with *SROB* (Suffolk Record Office, Bury St. Edmunds Branch).

<sup>44</sup> *Husting*, 2:310. See also *Sudbury 1*, no. 1035, 360; and *Sudbury 2*, no. 294, 174.

<sup>45</sup> Indeed, in 1429, *Reg. Henry Chichele*, 2:411, the knight Gerald Braybrooke asked for three priests to visit Jerusalem, Rome, Compostela, and St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, saying masses along the way and in those places.

such requests always included three elements: direct representation; specifying the pilgrimage nature of the journey; and requesting a specific shrine location.

The proxy work of these pilgrimages was of prime concern. In nearly forty percent of these cases, testators explicitly asked for a pilgrimage “on my behalf” or “in my name.”<sup>46</sup> While most testators who asked for a priest-pilgrim to say masses in Rome specified that the priest’s work ought to be done for many people – not only the soul of the testator but also the souls of spouses, parents, or family members – testators who asked for a proxy pilgrim directed the benefit only to themselves. Here the relationship of proxy pilgrim to testator was seen as a much stronger one-to-one representation. This relationship needed to be substitutional because the proxy pilgrim carried out acts not just *on behalf of* the testator but *as* the testator. To request that a pilgrimage be done “in my name” suggests that the testator wanted the benefit of visiting a shrine to pass through the proxy to the testator.

It is difficult to decipher the motivations behind these requests primarily because the requests themselves are quite terse. I have found only two instances, for example, that explicitly list an indulgence as the goal of the proxy pilgrimage.<sup>47</sup> Even so, it is likely that indulgences were the primary goal for testators even if they were not explicitly mentioned. As scholars have made clear, indulgences were “too much taken for granted to be memorable.”<sup>48</sup>

Nonetheless, testators did leave some clues about the expected benefits. In the majority of these requests, testators included a certain amount of money for the proxy pilgrimage – intended either as a donation to the shrine or as a stipend for the proxy pilgrim, although this distinction is not always made clear. Between 1396 and 1530, it seems that the base rate for hiring a proxy pilgrim for local and domestic pilgrimages was 6s. 8d. (i.e., 80 pence or half a mark; commonly called a “noble”) for the entire journey, although that was sometimes a common rate for donations to shrines as well.<sup>49</sup> Some testators paid much more,

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<sup>46</sup> A representative sample includes: *Husting*, 1:663–64, 679; *Husting*, 2:41, 27, 162–63; *Sudbury 1*, no. 345, 129, no. 346, 130; *Sudbury 2*, no. 146, 83; *Reg. Henry Chichele*, 2:280–81, 485; *Testamenta Vetusta*, ed. Nicholas Harris Nicholas (London: Nichols and Son, 1826), 1:326; and *Norfolk Archaeology*, 1:115, and 6:277. A variation on this theme was “for the good of my soul”: *Husting*, 1:640–41; *Testamenta Vetusta*, 1:196; and *Sudbury 1*, no. 17, 8. One careful testator made sure to specify that if the person he requested as his proxy could not complete the pilgrimage, his executors ought to find “another in my name”; *Reg. Henry Chichele*, 2:74.

<sup>47</sup> *The Register of Bishop Philip Repingdon, 1405–1419*, ed. Margaret Archer (Hereford: Lincoln Record Society, 1963), 1:122; and *Sudbury 2*, no. 280, 167.

<sup>48</sup> Diana Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000), 188.

<sup>49</sup> To Compostela: *Sede Vacante Wills*, ed. C. Eveleigh Woodruff (Canterbury: Cross & Jackman, 1914), no. 34, 2; to Walsingham, see *Testamenta Vetusta*, 1:326; *Testamenta Cantiana: East Kent*, ed. Arthur Hussey (London: Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, 1907), 136, 143; and “The Parish

especially for pilgrimages outside of England, while others left the amounts up to their executors.<sup>50</sup>

Of course, giving any money to the proxy came with certain risks. In a manuscript of exempla from the early fifteenth century, probably written by a monk at Christ Church Canterbury, there is a story about a man who went on a pilgrimage for another man and was given a penny to donate at a shrine. When the proxy approached a few taverns, however, he could not help himself and spent half the penny on beer, one quarter at a time. After finishing, but still thirsty, he wanted to spend the other half as well. But as he once again broke the half into quarters, one quarter fell in the dirt. The man called out to Christ, saying that he appointed that quarter for Christ and the remaining quarter for his drink. Christ replied that the quarter of the penny that lay in the dirt could not make up for his grave sins, and the exemplum closes by stating that this man suffered in purgatory for this offense.<sup>51</sup> This story warns both the testator to choose a reputable proxy and the proxy to manage the testator’s wishes with respect.

## Place in Proxy Pilgrimage

Behind each of these three stated motivations for a proxy pilgrimage was the importance of a particular place. While completing a vow, having mass said, or gaining an indulgence were perhaps more explicitly important to the testators, they nonetheless specified in what place their proxy was to achieve their request. Based on a digital visualization and geographical analysis of this evidence – that is, by plotting will and shrine locations as beginning and end points – it is possible to refine the argument that place was important for proxy pilgrimages.<sup>52</sup> Four points can be made from this evidence.

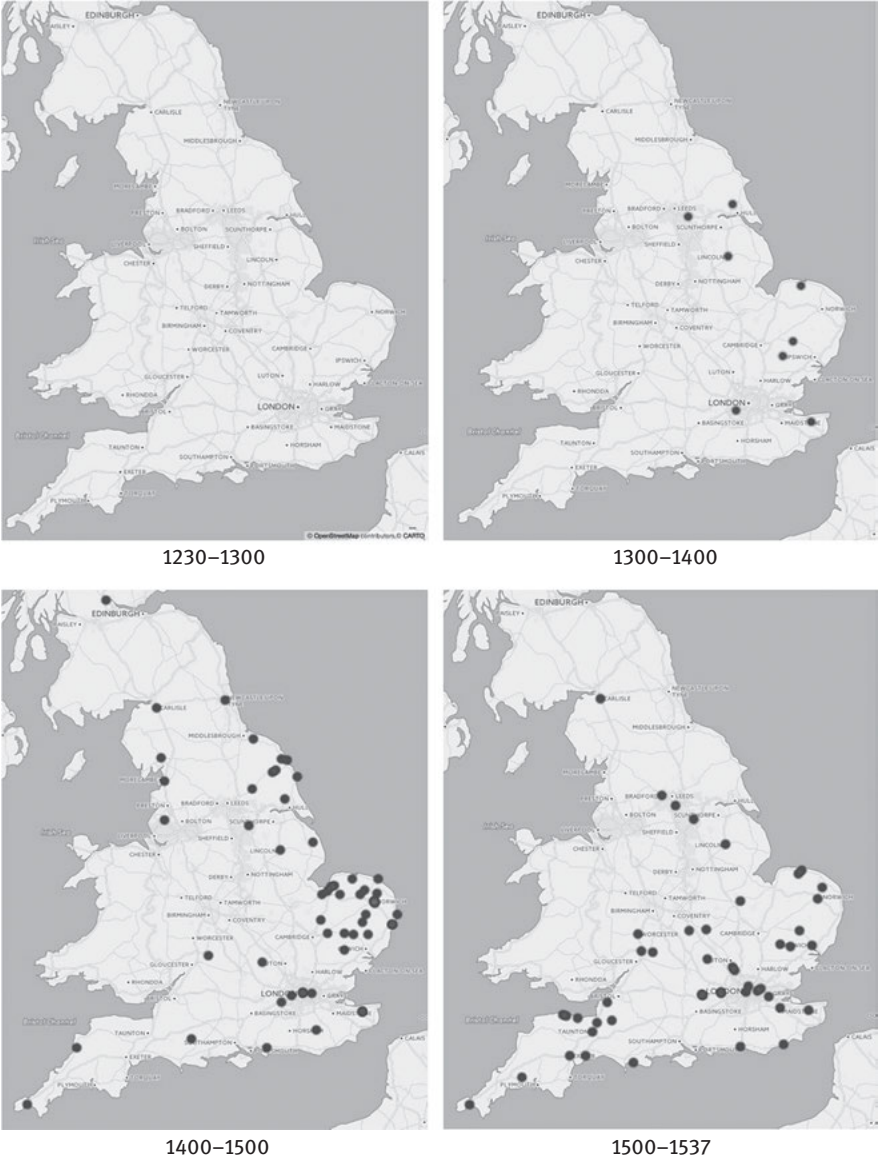
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Churches of West Kent,” *Transactions of the St. Paul’s Ecclesiological Society*, 3:253; and to Hailles: *Testamenta Cantiana: East Kent*, 271. Some stipends were, of course, much lower. For example, in 1445, Richard Aniyis left John Wodeward only 40d. (i.e., half the standard rate for local and domestic pilgrimages) to go from Sudbury, in Suffolk, to Compostela, in northwest Spain; *Sudbury 1*, no. 345, 129. Donations to shrines were often the same amount, 6s. 8d.: *Bedfordshire Wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury 1383–1548*, ed. Margaret McGregor (Bedford: Published by the Society, 1979), no. 101, 127; and *Testamenta Eboracensia*, vol. 5, no. 63, 74. Many donation amounts were much lower than 6s. 8d., however.

<sup>50</sup> *Sudbury 1*, no. 1466, 508: Isabel Man simply asked that Alice Obroke be “well paid for her labor and expenses.”

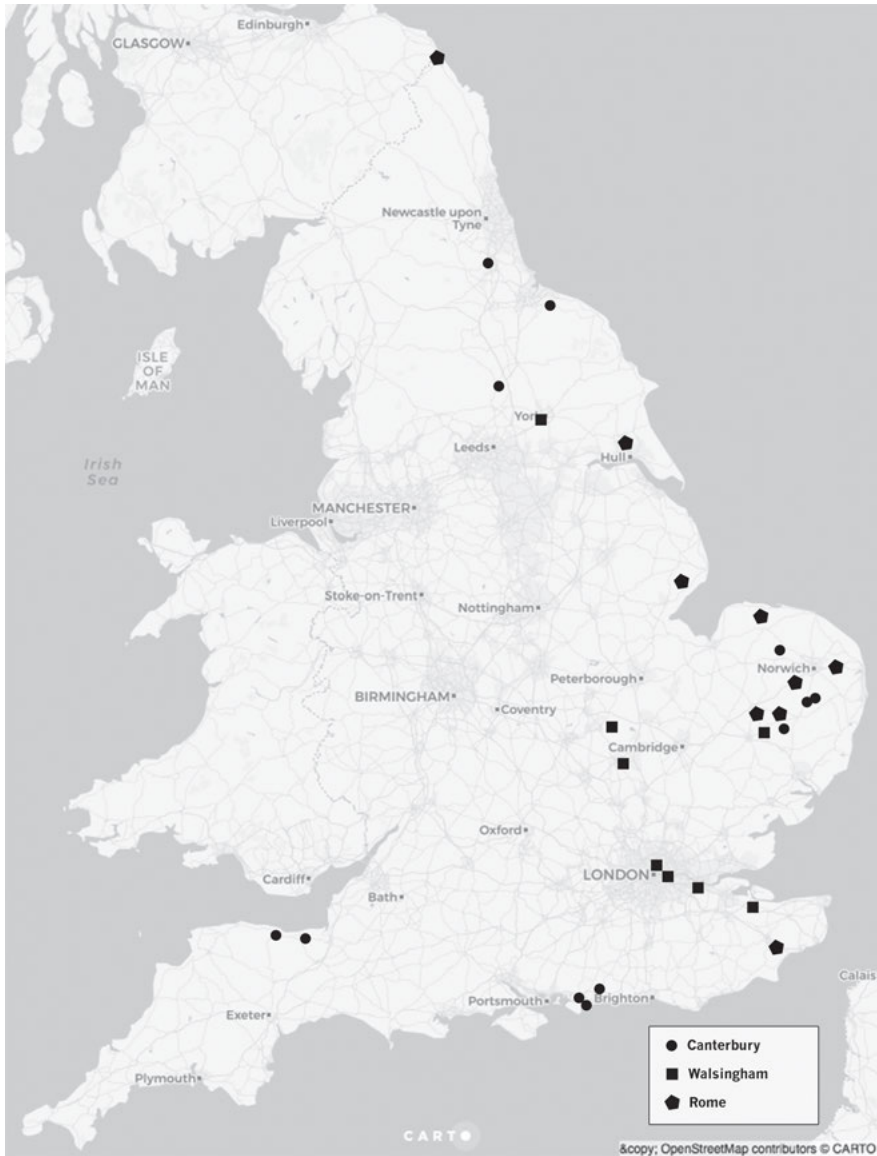
<sup>51</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, MS 78, f. 49r–49v.

<sup>52</sup> The interactive visualization is available at [www.gavinfort.com/proxypilgrimage](http://www.gavinfort.com/proxypilgrimage) (last accessed on Aug. 22, 2017).

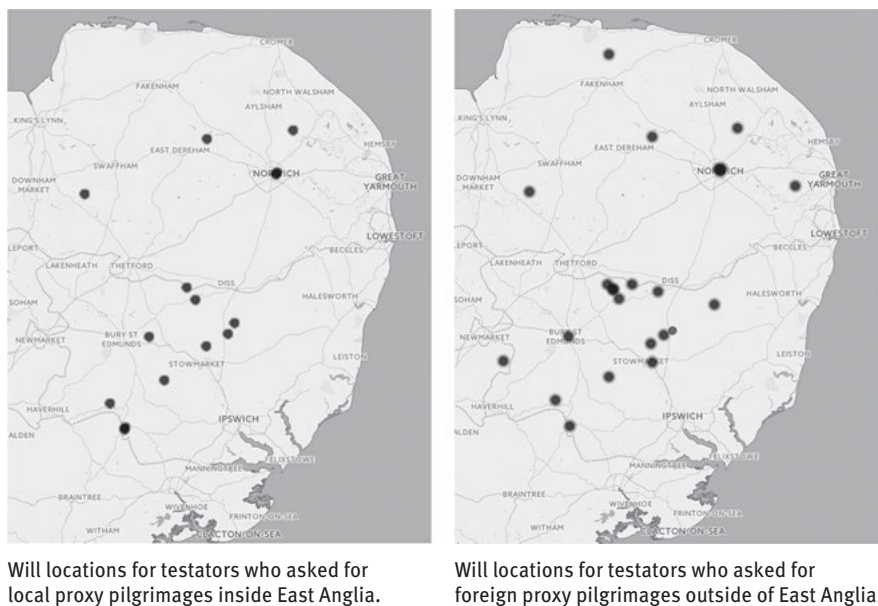


**Fig. 1:** Shrines requested by testators for a proxy pilgrimage, 1230–1537. © Gavin Fort.

First, from the fourteenth century onward, most English testators asked for a pilgrimage within England (Fig. 1). Perhaps reflecting the dangers and costs of traveling to the Holy Land, or even Rome and Santiago de Compostela, while English society experienced widespread disease and war, these data also



**Fig. 2:** Will locations filtered according to requested shrine location. All circles, for example, represent requests for a proxy pilgrimage to Canterbury and squares represent a request for Walsingham. © Gavin Fort.



**Fig. 3:** Will locations organized by where the proxy pilgrim was asked to be sent, 1400–1537.  
© Gavin Fort.

confirm that proxy pilgrimage was a growing insular activity at the end of the Middle Ages.

Second, even so, this evidence does not suggest that pilgrimage was hyperlocal. Figure 2 shows a distribution of where people wanted to send a proxy pilgrim based upon where a given will was located. It is immediately clear that Rome (polygons) drew proxy pilgrimage requests only from people on the wealthier eastern seaboard. Noticeable also is that major shrines – like Canterbury (circles) and Walsingham (squares) – did not draw these types of requests from people in their immediate areas even though a large proportion of wills from 1450 to 1537 included a request for at least one of these two major pilgrimage sites. This suggests that testators living near major pilgrimage sites felt that they would earn greater reward if they sent a proxy pilgrim further afield.

Third, this conclusion is further buttressed by an examination of the evidence from one region, East Anglia. Even here, a wealthy area and a hotbed of local and important shrines (like Walsingham), testators routinely asked for proxy pilgrimages outside of the region. As Figure 3 shows, there was a broader trend to send proxy pilgrims elsewhere. The map on the left shows the will locations for testators who stipulated that a proxy pilgrim visit a shrine inside East Anglia (18 testators asked for 55 proxy pilgrimages). The map on the right shows the will



locations for testators who requested that a proxy pilgrim visit a shrine outside of East Anglia – either elsewhere in England or outside the country (33 testators asked for 46 proxy pilgrimages). Although there were more requests for proxy pilgrimages inside this region (55 v. 46), these requests were made by far fewer testators than those who asked for proxy pilgrimages outside this region (18 v. 33). Further, those who required local pilgrimages were clumped together in Norwich (in the north) and Sudbury (in the south), while those who required a proxy pilgrimage outside this region were located in a much wider area.

Further, although I cannot show it here, these requests occurred within a relatively short period of time, within one to two generations. Indeed, there is a strong sense that testators followed family tradition or local custom in asking for a proxy pilgrimage. For example, in 1439 and 1462, a father and then a son both asked for a priest-pilgrim to Rome.<sup>53</sup> And in 1472 a man in Glemsford asked for a proxy pilgrim to Walsingham and Canterbury, just as another man from that same village had done a year prior.<sup>54</sup> Given that the middle swath of the right map in Figure 3 represents those requests for proxy pilgrimages outside of the region, it would seem that the prevailing religious culture at this time in this region favored proxy pilgrimages elsewhere.<sup>55</sup> Mark Wynn’s ideas about the meanings of place for pilgrims is helpful here. At least in this area in the fifteenth century, requesting a proxy pilgrimage to a place outside of East Anglia was a way to connect with neighbors, friends, and family who made similar testamentary choices, and provided the means to share in the social tradition of proxy pilgrimage.

Last, evidence for proxy pilgrimages in late medieval England show that pilgrimage was not in decline on the eve of the English Reformation. As Figure 1 showed, between 1500 and 1537, there were 109 requests for a proxy pilgrim, while there were only 51 requests between 1400 and 1437. While there are mitigating factors that make this kind of comparison problematic – an increase in the number of extant wills in the sixteenth century, for example – it is certain that proxy pilgrimage was not in decline. What Figure 1 does not show is that there was also a dramatic increase of people asking for a greater number of proxy pilgrimages to smaller shrines. This proliferation of requests per testator, sometimes as many as eighteen requests, combined with the proliferation of destinations, suggests that proxy pilgrimage requests were indeed becoming more popular in the sixteenth century.

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<sup>53</sup> *Sudbury 1*, no. 20, 10; and *Sudbury 2*, no. 89, 53.

<sup>54</sup> *Sudbury 2*, no. 640, 519; and no. 508, 476.

<sup>55</sup> Matthew Champion, “Personal Piety or Priestly Persuasion: Evidence of Pilgrimage Bequests in the Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439–1474,” *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture* 3.3 (2012): 66–82; here 75–78, examines will requests in this precise region as well.

The testamentary and geographical evidence of proxy pilgrimage points to some general conclusions. First, in all of the cases listed above, the testator asked for a proxy to be his or her spiritual representative. Whether the proxy was intended to pay the more legalistic debt of an uncompleted vow, or act as a priest-pilgrim to say mass in Rome, or carry a few pennies to a local shrine, in every situation that proxy was not only working for the good of the testator but also functioning – legally, physically, spiritually – *as* the testator. Second, the purpose of these requests can generally be grouped into three categories: to complete a vow, to hire a priest as a surrogate pilgrim to Rome, or to reap the spiritual benefits of a pilgrimage, like an indulgence or the favor of the saint. Because evidence is found in wills, testators saw proxy pilgrimage as one of a range of options to obtain post mortem benefits.<sup>56</sup>

Third, and apropos of place, there was a greater focus on the destination rather than the journey. Testators cared very little about how their proxies endured their journeys – especially their remuneration – but cared very much about where they went and for what reasons.<sup>57</sup> This focus suggests that testators maintained greater faith in the benefits of the saints or the pardon of the church as the merit that could be transferred to them, rather than any benefits issuing from either the physical nature of the journey or the testator's own spiritual state during the proxy pilgrimage. In this way, proxy pilgrimage had an extreme emphasis on place in comparison to in-person pilgrimage. In other words, precisely because the testator cared only for the destination and the benefits thereof, even if he could not go himself, he still required that someone go somewhere. Just as for the virtual pilgrim, where it was not so much about the virtual nature of the pilgrimage, but that the virtual pilgrimage have a destination, so for those who requested a proxy pilgrim, it was not so much about the proxy nature of the pilgrimage, but that the proxy pilgrimage reach the desired location. While these late-medieval testators needed advocates who could win for them eternal benefit, what mattered most was that these proxies conducted a pilgrimage to a place on their behalf. And testators were confident that this act of proxy pilgrimage would result in spiritual benefit that would accrue to them, even after they passed beyond the temporal realm.

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<sup>56</sup> Although it was a common phrase, in at least two cases the testator specified that the proxy pilgrimage ought to happen “immediately after my decease,” which suggests that testators thought there was a connection between the pilgrimage and their post-mortem spiritual journey; see *Husting*, 2:220–21; and *Norfolk Archaeology*, 4:338.

<sup>57</sup> I have seen only one instance where the testator specified exactly *how* the proxy ought to go on pilgrimage: *SROI*, HD 2448/1/1/482 [*SROB* Johnson 161], Joan Percy.

## Conclusion

This article has demonstrated the importance of place in alternative pilgrimage practices in the late Middle Ages. The endurance of place as a central part of pilgrimage is curious given that both virtual and proxy pilgrimage did not require the pilgrim to physically travel to a particular location. Stemming from the long tradition of conflict within pilgrimage itself regarding the importance of the spirit and the body, these two alternative pilgrimage practices occupied somewhat opposite positions. While a virtual pilgrimage was certainly an embodied experience, it was primarily an interior, devotional exercise that sometimes included a functional end, like the acquisition of an indulgence. A proxy pilgrimage, on the other hand, was a vicariously embodied experience that placed all its emphasis on the destination of the proxy pilgrim rather than the spiritual state of the testator. Even so, both alternatives shared a concern with the body and place, and fused the two elements together – there was not one without the other.

Requests for proxy pilgrimages sometimes indicated a specific motivation – vow completion, singing mass, earning an indulgence – but these were not always explicit. As a result, Mark Wynn's theories about place in pilgrimage can help explain why testators preserved place's crucial position in proxy pilgrimage. Because place communicates the meanings associated with a specific post-mortem body, we can see that testators, who would soon join the company of the dead, wanted to experience even vicariously the presence of saintly bodies in order to share in their heavenly rewards. Further, because pilgrimage to a place encourages the creation of a group identity in which all participants share in a common experience and identify with Christian history, requests for proxy pilgrimage retained the focus on place so that testators could share in the pilgrimage experiences of others. In these ways, proxy pilgrimage, with its emphasis on destination rather than journey, provided the mechanism for testators not only to vicariously receive the benefit of a pilgrimage but also to participate with other pilgrims and so find themselves as part of the broader Christian community, both living and dead. While Felix Fabri elevated the meditation about a holy place over physically experiencing it, what mattered to virtual and proxy pilgrims was that they arrived together at a destination so that the place could become the medium through which they found a communal identity.

Jiří Koteň

# Time and Space in Late-Medieval Dynastic Chronicles: With a Focus on Examples from Czech-Language Literature

In this chapter, I will focus on the way in which time and space are perceived in medieval Czech popular narratives. I draw from Bakhtin's chronotope theory,<sup>1</sup> as well as from narratology, which in recent years has increasingly reflected upon the development of functions and forms in narratives from different historical periods.<sup>2</sup> Here, I shall attempt to analyze the texts of medieval chronicles associated with royal families, which beginning in the sixteenth century became popular chapbooks. I shall specifically examine the *Chronicle of Štilfrid* (Czech original *Kronika o Štilfridovi*),<sup>3</sup> *Chronicle of Bruncvik* (*Kronika o Bruncvíkovi*),<sup>4</sup> and the *Chronicle of Melusine* (*Kronika o Meluzíně*).<sup>5</sup> In the second part of the essay, I will focus more attention on the functions of personifying real geographic places in late medieval Czech literature.

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1 See Mikhail M. Bakhtin's fundamental study, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope of the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas, 1981), 84–110. See also Albrecht Classen's introductory article in the present volume.

2 For basic knowledge and literature about diachronic approaches and the historicizing of narratology see Eva von Contzen, "Why We Need a Medieval Narratology: A Manifesto," *Diegesis: Interdisciplinary E-Journal for Narrative Research* 3.2 (2014): 1–21.

3 "Kronika o Štilfridovi," *Průza českého středověku*, ed. Jaroslav Kolár. Živá díla minulosti, 95 (Prague: Odeon, 1983), 149–62.

4 "Kronika o Bruncvíkovi," *Průza českého středověku*, ed. Jaroslav Kolár. Živá díla minulosti, 95 (Prague: Odeon, 1983), 163–78. For a German translation of the *Chronicle*, see *Die Romane von dem Ritter mit dem Löwen*, ed. Xenja von Ertzdorff and Rudolf Schulz. Chloe, 20 (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1994).

5 "Kronika kratochvilná o ctné a šlechtěné panně Meluzíně. Kterážto opět znovu jest v jazyku českém vytištěná," *Tři knížky lidového čtení. Meluzína. Magelona. Jenovefa*, ed. Jaroslav Kolár. Česká knižnice (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2000), 7–110.

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## Time and Space in Medieval Narratives

In order to analyze changes in the time-space categories in these works, I shall first describe an older type of narrative time-space. To illustrate my point better, I shall present the characteristics of this earlier time-space type using a specific example, the rhymed composition verse narrative *Tandareis and Flordibel* (Czech orig. *Tandariáš a Floribella*).<sup>6</sup> The Czech version of this work appeared in the fourteenth century in the form of a significantly abbreviated version of a more expansive romance, which was written by the Austrian-Bavarian poet Der Pleier in the thirteenth century.

The romance of *Tandareis* presents a typical example of the type of time-space that Mikhail Bakhtin dubbed the *adventure chronotope*. He describes it by way of depicting a foreign world in “adventure-time.”<sup>7</sup> The most characteristic features of the adventure chronotope can be summarized in the following four points<sup>8</sup>:

1. The narrative of courtly romances, such as *Tandareis*, does not acknowledge temporality. The heroes do not note the passing of time, they do not age; they do not even show signs of injury or homesickness. When at the end of the story, King Arthur finally grants Tandareis permission to marry Flordibel, the narrator informs the reader that the heroes have “eternal paradise.”<sup>9</sup>
2. The effect of temporality (or a substitute temporality) is achieved through recounting a series of trials. When the poet wishes to invoke a semblance of temporal duration, the trials are multiplied and identical trials are recounted repeatedly. For instance, in *Tandareis*, the conquest of castles guarded by giants is repeated. Tandareis always defeats the giant and sends out news of his victory. A description of the victory over the giant is repeated three times in identically conceived chapters. Similarly, the narrative time is extended when the same pattern is used to narrate the hero’s tournament victory three times.
3. A narrative that lacks a perception of time is based on the hero’s movement through space. In the narrative dealing Tandareis the spatial story begins with the arrival of Flordibel, which culminates in a royal promise to punish any vices.

6 “Tandariáš a Floribella,” *Rytířské srdce majíce. Česká rytířská epika 14. století*, ed. Eduard Petráň and Dagmar Marečková. Živá díla minulosti, 96 (Prague: Odeon, 1984), 257–309.

7 Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope of the Novel” (see note 1), 89–110. For a summary, see also: Uta Störmer-Caysa, *Grundstrukturen mittelalterlicher Erzählungen: Raum und Zeit im höfischen Roman*. de Gruyter Studienbuch (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 79–84. See also the contribution to this volume by Anne Scott, focusing on Geoffrey Chaucer’s works where time and space matter centrally in contrast to courtly romances.

8 I formulate four theses based on my own observations of the parameters of monitored narratives. I am freely inspired by Bakhtin’s theory of adventure time in the novel. See Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope of the Novel” (see note 1), 89–110, 151–58.

9 “Tandariáš a Floribella” (see note 6), 309.

Once Tandareis and Flordibel have fallen in love with each other, a conflict that prohibits their relationship arises and culminates in another movement through space – the lovers flee Arthur’s court. This flight results in a pursuit (the movement of the king’s troops), the capture of Flordibel (the movement of the heroine back to the royal court), and the further travels of Tandareis to new places that bring new trials. The happy end of the story can also be described as a movement through space: Tandareis returns to Arthur’s court.

4. The world of the courtly romance contains clear boundaries which create spatial discontinuity. The storyworld is most often depicted as a dichotomous world, in which a sharply defined border separates the natural world from the fantastical. The natural realm is the Christian world of Arthur’s empire, beyond the borders of which lies an expansive realm of giants, dwarves, and pagans. The romance of Tandareis, however, does not depict the foreign world as a wild empire of horrors and danger, but more as a place open for plundering and conquering.

While I have tried to summarize the typical features of the adventure chronotope, which is representative of courtly romances, I would like to add a few more notes here. The space of this type, as Uta Störmer Caysa notes, is not mimetic; spatial determinacy exclusively serves the needs of the hero’s actions (the foreign world in *Tandareis* is a place of conquest; the world of the Christian homeland is a place that recognizes his glory).<sup>10</sup> The discontinuity between the Christian world and unknown foreign lands reflects the medieval “bipolar” view of the world as center and periphery, the world of Christians and non-believers, a microcosm and macrocosm, and so forth. In my opinion, the preference of space over time is deeply rooted in the medieval understanding of the world. As Aron Gurevich has documented, medieval people perceived the passage of time much less clearly than space and with much less urgency, despite the growing availability of specific time measuring gadgets used in monasteries or in city halls. They experienced space not only in their daily movements through it, but also in shared social and religious systems, which, among other things, spread the spatially dominant master plots of the soul’s pilgrimage to salvation, the pilgrimage to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, or the crusades.<sup>11</sup>

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**10** Uta Störmer-Caysa, *Grundstrukturen mittelalterlicher Erzählungen* (see note 7), 34: “Erzählte Geschichten haben keine natürliche Umgebung, sondern immer eine artifizielle” (Narrative accounts do not have a natural environment, but always an artificial one).

**11** Aron J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, trans. by G. L. Campbell (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), see especially the chapter about space and time. Cf. also Albrecht Classen’s

The adventure chronotope of *Tandareis* does not attempt to produce a realistic semblance of time and space. The *Chronicle of Stilfrid*, the *Chronicle of Bruncvik*, and the *Chronicle of Melusine*, which I shall deal with next, I regard to be works presenting a more modern take on depicting time and space. Their temporality is based on an attempt at creating a greater degree of imitation. The fact that the word *chronicle* appears in the titles of all three works studied here is proof of this phenomenon. Also, the perception of space in chronicles associated with royal families undergoes a fundamental change and gains in importance.

The *Chronicle of Stilfrid* and the *Chronicle of Bruncvik*, which together form an interconnected diptych of tales, are preserved in manuscripts dating back to the fifteenth century. However, they may have been created already in the late fourteenth century.<sup>12</sup> At the base of both tales is a story revolving around improving the coat of arms of the Duchy of Bohemia. Stilfrid sets out in the world, and in the service of the king of Naples he defeats twelve great heroes. For his efforts, an eagle is added to the coat of arms. Stilfrid's son, Bruncvik, follows his father's example by adding the lion which he befriended during the knightly adventures he experienced in fantastically depicted lands to the coat of arms.

The *Diverting Chronicle of the Virtuous and Noble Maiden Melusine* (*Kronika kratochvilná o ctné a šlechtetné panně Meluzíně*) traces its origins back to the fourteenth century and was written at the behest of the Duke of Berry, Marie of Bar, and the Moravian Margrave Jobst of Luxemburg. Legends associated with the royal family of Lusignan spread in the Czech lands via a translation of the German prose version by Thüring von Ringoltingen (1456),<sup>13</sup> produced in Czech in 1555 at the latest.<sup>14</sup> The hero Raymond meets the maiden Melusine, thanks to whom he becomes a powerful ruler. He does not keep his promise not to look at his wife on Saturday, and he sees how this beautiful woman turns into a serpent

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reflections in his introductory chapter to this volume, especially since they correspond so closely with my own.

<sup>12</sup> See Jaroslav Kolár, *Česká zábavná próza 16. století a tzv. knížky lidového čtení*. Rozpravy Československé Akademie věd, 11 (Prague: Nakladatelství ČSAV, 1960), 48–49.

<sup>13</sup> About Thüring's *Melusine* see, e.g., Albrecht Classen, *The German Volksbuch: A Critical History of a Late Medieval Genre*. Studies in German Language and Literature, 15 (Lewiston, NY, Queenston, Ont., and Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 141–62. See also his recent study, "The Melusine Figure in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century German Literature and Art: Cultural-Historical Information Within the Pictorial Program. With a Discussion of the Melusine-Lüsterweibchen Connection," *Melusine's Footprint: Tracing the Legacy of a Medieval Myth*, ed. Misty Urban, Deva F. Kemmis, and Melissa Ridley Elmes. Explorations in Medieval Culture, 4 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 74–94.

<sup>14</sup> Kolár, *Česká zábavná próza 16. století a tzv. knížky lidového čtení* (see note 12), 68.

from the waist down. Raymond's and Melusine's happiness is lost, but their sons gain glory and in many countries they acquire the throne.

## Time and Space in the *Chronicle of Stilfrid* and the *Chronicle of Bruncvik*

At first glance, the time-space of the *Chronicle of Stilfrid* seems to correspond with the adventure chronotope that I have already described in connection to *Tandaréis*. The story is not temporal, but spatial; it is built upon the axis of a quest for adventure. Temporality is based on the time of the trials, which are repeated following an identical pattern. Thus, *Stilfrid* does little to update the adventure chronotope. So, why have I chosen it? The tale is interesting when we consider its connection with *Bruncvik*. The beginning of the *Chronicle of Stilfrid* already presents the hero as Bruncvik's father. This fact means that this narrative was supposed to be read as part of a cycle. The conclusion of the story diverges from the customs of courtly romances. The story ends with a return to Bohemia and Stilfrid's unexpected death. Thus, the hero does not exist in a timeless world. In contrast, the plan of time's passage is independent of the plan of the hero's trials. It brings death and the changing of rulers. Combining both tales therefore sets the story in the framework of dynastic time.

The *Chronicle of Bruncvik* brings an even clearer transformation of the time category. The tendency toward more mimetic temporality can be clearly documented here. The narrator takes great pains to inform the reader accurately about the timing of the story. We learn that Bruncvik heads out on his journey two years and three months after his father's death. He spends a quarter of a year at sea, and three years on an island with a magnetic mountain – a 'classic' medieval motif; see, for instance, the anonymous *Herzog Ernst* (ca. 1170/1220; a Czech version *Vévoda Arnošt* is known from the fourteenth century).<sup>15</sup> We are informed that the entire adventure takes place over seven years, that the lion accompanies Bruncvik for much of the time, and so forth. The information about the length of his trials is precise. The narrative lives up to its title and becomes a chronicle of heroic adventures.

At first glance, it may seem that in *Bruncvik* space is perceived less innovatively – once again in keeping with the adventure chronotope. The spatial

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15 "Vévoda Arnošt," *Rytířské srdce majíce. Česká rytířská epika 14. století*, ed. Eduard Petrů and Dagmar Marečková. *Živá díla minulosti*, 96 (Prague: Odeon, 1984), 23–194.



discontinuity between home and foreign lands is preserved. Whereas mentions of Bohemia and Prague seem verisimilar, foreign lands are fantastic. They are home to strange natural phenomena (a magnetic mountain) and creatures (basilisk, the Roc bird, etc.), as well as magical items (a ring that grants strength, a sword that can be commanded to cut off people's heads). The fact that the chronicle acts as a praiseful allegory is of key importance. It is therefore likely that the author, in recounting the story, did not express his own ideas about the world and nature, but rather he attempted to describe adventures so incredible that they would elevate the greatness and the glory of the Czech ruler.

The allegorical plan is instructive in its naming of fantastical creatures and places. Bruncvik, on the island where he is imprisoned, meets a strange maiden who bears the name of Europe. This creature has the head and arms of a maiden, but "the rest is all fish."<sup>16</sup> The knight asks Europe if she is good or evil and he gets an ambiguous answer. The narrative further mentions only that Bruncvik spent time with the maiden and found comfort in her. What does this mean? I lean toward the hypothesis that this strange sexual relationship with a non-human creature increases Bruncvik's credit as a hero, similarly to the physical deformities of Melusine's sons. Bruncvik subjugates nature, like a man subjugates a woman, becoming its master. The "Europe" motif does not seem to have any other function in the narrative.<sup>17</sup>

However, we can find several similar motifs in the *Chronicle*. Bruncvik defeats the basilisk at a castle "which they call Arabia,"<sup>18</sup> before saving a maiden named Africa. Bruncvik and Africa, who has serpent tails in place of legs, live as husband and wife. Africa is devoted to him and trusts him. Once the knight acquires a magical sword from her, he leaves her and massacres her country. The author of the story was clearly not afraid that the book's readers might consider the relationship with a pagan creature as unchivalrous behavior, not even in light of the fact that Bruncvik had a spouse in Bohemia. Space continues to be depicted as abstract and fantastical, although the characters of Europe and Africa personify contemporary geographical knowledge. The space of the real world, in which the hero demonstrates success, is introduced to the story through allegory. Foreign lands surrender to him, just like some women give in to men.

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16 "Kronika o Bruncvíkovi" (see note 4), 167.

17 About an allegorical function (including characters of Europe and Africa) in Bruncvik's story, see Jaroslav Kolár, "K otázce alegorických plánů v staročeských povídkách o Štířfridovi a Bruncvíkovi," *Návraty bez konce* (Brno: Atlantis, 1999), 67–87.

18 "Kronika o Bruncvíkovi" (see note 4), 171.

## Time and Space in the *Chronicle of Melusine*

The *Chronicle of Melusine* is more extensive and elaborate than the *Chronicles of Stilfrid* and the *Chronicles of Bruncvik*, although it uses similar methods to depict time-space. Again, the time of a chronicle keeper is applied: the story summarizes events day by day. It is recounted what “happened the next day,” how events unfolded “then the day after that,” and so forth. But we can still find elements typical of the temporality of courtly romances in *Melusine*. For instance, we can look at the narrative for information of how Melusine gives birth; childbirth is presented as a repeated trial: “Again Melusine had a third son ...,” “again she had a fifth son,”<sup>19</sup> and so forth.

The *Chronicle of Melusine* – similarly to *Bruncvik* – is also grounded in dynastical temporality. It tells the story of Raymond’s and Melusine’s dynasty. Another innovation is linked to genealogical time. According to Martin Nejedlý, the Duke of Berry, who commissioned Jean d’Arras to write the oldest version of *Melusine*, often read Boethius as well as Guillaume de Machaut’s poem *Le remède de fortune* (Engl. *The Cure of Ill Fortune*). The duke allegedly “had an honest fear of the unpredictable power of Fortune.”<sup>20</sup> The theme of the *Chronicle of Melusine* is the story of the rise and fall of a hero. In Jean d’Arras’s version the motif of Fortune is omnipresent, but in the Czech translation of Thüring’s version it is no longer mentioned explicitly. But it persisted as the main axis of the story. When the unhappy Raymond first meets Melusine, the fairy promises him “happiness and wealth on this earth.”<sup>21</sup> When Raymond breaks his vow, Melusine informs him that “no one from your line shall be happy.”<sup>22</sup> The fate of the main hero of the *Chronicle* serves as a powerful illustration of the inconstancy of being in fortune’s good graces. The medieval person imagined the fickleness of fate as being spun around by the Wheel of Fortune. Raymond’s meeting with Melusine first brought him to the apex of power and glory; breaking his promise, however, dragged him down to the bottom.

I would just add that in *Melusine* the heroes are the masters of their own fate. Raymond committed an offense when he broke his promise. Melusine’s father, Helmas, was unable to demonstrate restraint during his wife’s post-partum period. Melusine’s grandson ignored the risks of incest and yearned for his mother’s sister Melior. Altogether, the heroes break taboos and have to be punished.

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<sup>19</sup> “Kronika o Meluzíně” (see note 5), 30–31.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Nejedlý, *Fortuny kolo vrtkavé. Láska, moc a společnost ve středověku* (Prague: Nakladatelství Aleš Skřivan ml., 2003), 70.

<sup>21</sup> “Kronika o Meluzíně” (see note 5), 18.

<sup>22</sup> “Kronika o Meluzíně” (see note 5), 70.

Thus, a similar method of personification, which we have already encountered in *Bruncvik*, is repeated. In *Melusine*, the female heroines do not personify geographical space, but the space of natural forces. Violations of nature's order are depicted as violations of preserving female sexual purity. Male heroes call punishment upon themselves by entering the forbidden territory of women.

Nonetheless, in the *Chronicles of Melusine* we find a character that does not personify the symbolic space of the forces of nature but a concrete geographical space. One of the sisters of the maiden Melusine bears the name of Palestine. In the story, she first appears as one of three maidens by a well where Raymond meets Melusine. We learn more about Palestine's identity in the chapter devoted to the adventures of Melusine's most courageous son, Geoffrey. From an inscription carved into a wall of the tomb<sup>23</sup> Geoffrey discovers the secrets of his family. Because Melusine and her sisters had avenged their mother, each of them received a "gift." Melusine, the youngest, got a snake's tail, the older, Melior, got a sparrow hawk, which she was forced to guard at a castle in Armenia, and finally, Palestine, the oldest sister, "had to watch over the treasure of her father until someone from our [i.e., Melusine's] dynasty comes to take over the treasure so that it serves to conquer the promised land and the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem."<sup>24</sup> In one of the final chapters, the story of Palestine is fully told: Melusine's sister keeps watch over the family treasure in Aragon. Not even the bravest knight of Arthur's court manages to fight his way through the monsters protecting Palestine's castle. Geoffrey thus decides to set off after Palestine and successfully complete the trial, but before he departs, he falls ill and dies. The story is open-ended. Palestine remains the guardian of the family's treasure, which will open the way to conquering Jerusalem for her descendants.

This interpretation of the personification of Palestine seems to be straightforward. It is similar to the story in which Bruncvik gains glory by mastering Europe and Africa like a husband who has subjugated his wife. The situation is similar in *Melusine*: Setting off on a journey to see the fairy Palestine means political gains in the place of the same name. But success could be achieved only by a descendant of the House of Lusignan, that is, by a direct heir of the fairy Melusine, who was bound by blood to Palestine. Thus, Melusine's descendants are entrusted to protect Christianity and the Holy Sepulcher due to a family inheritance, to blood

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<sup>23</sup> In Thüring von Ringoltingen's original version the epitaph is on the sarcophagus. See Albrecht Classen's article "Objects of Memory as Hermeneutic Media in Medieval German Literature: Hartmann von Aue's *Gregorius*, Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, Thüring von Ringoltingen's *Melusine*, and *Fortunatus*," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 65 (2009): 159–82.

<sup>24</sup> "Kronika o Meluzině" (see note 5), 84.

shared with the daughters of Queen Presine. The claims of others, even of the bravest of heroes, are thus illegitimate.

I should point out that not only the French kings of the House of Luxemburg considered themselves to be the descendants of Melusine, but so too did Czech kings from this lineage who in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries acquired royal and imperial positions within the Holy Roman Empire. The *Chronicle of Melusine* was a popular adaptation of Coudrette's versified narrative (ca. 1400). Both versions, however, drew from the prose work of Jean d'Arras, who created the oldest version of the chronicle recording the house's history at the behest of the French House of Valois and the allied Luxemburgs. Jean d'Arras (ca. 1393), too, drew from older materials. He most likely borrowed some motifs from Walter Map's *De nugis curialium* (late twelfth century) and Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia imperialia* (early thirteenth century). In turn, both of these authors might have drawn from older folkloric tradition.<sup>25</sup>

Jean d'Arras's *Roman de Mélusine* was a work that contained a great deal of political propaganda. Melusine's dynasty was, according to the narrative, kin to the family of King Arthur. This alleged relationship gave the rulers who traced their origins back to the fairy a miraculous claim to power in the medieval world. Many of the events that are recounted in the various versions of the story were of an enduring nature in Europe, including the idea of waging crusades, which was still topical when Jean d'Arras penned his work. According to Czech historian Martin Nejedlý, "Palestine became a promise of new dynastic glory and allowed the author to dub one of Melusine's descendants a hero of the next crusade against the Muslims."<sup>26</sup>

Next I would like to turn my attention back to the category of fictional space. We have already noticed how in the adventure chronotope of the medieval romance there is a sharp boundary between the natural world, from which the hero comes, and the fantastical world, in which he undergoes trials and gains glory. The world beyond the borders is thoroughly non-mimetic; it bears no semblance to the real world known by the author of this medieval work and his listeners or readers.

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<sup>25</sup> Jacques Le Goff, "Melusine: Mother and Pioneer," *Time, Work & Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 205–07. See also the Melusine image in the mosaic floor of the Otranto cathedral; cf. Albrecht Classen "The Melusine Figure" (see note 13). See also his monograph *Water in Medieval Literature: An Ecocritical Reading*. Ecocritical Theory and Practice (Lanham, MD, Boulder, CO, et al.: Lexington Books, 2018), 215–36.

<sup>26</sup> Nejedlý, *Fortuny kolo vrtkavé* (see note 20), 53.

To support this claim I shall once again turn to the rhymed composition of *Tandareis and Flordibel*. The plot lacks any concrete topographical descriptions that might allow us to determine the location of the story in any greater detail. The places in which events recounted in the entertaining stories of court romances occur are simply of no importance. *Tandareis* is set in King Arthur's court, a place that is not further specified. The only topographic information mentioned in the composition, India, is referred to as the place whence Flordibel traveled to find Arthur. Otherwise, vagueness abounds: We learn that Tandareis's country is "proud, very hard, and full of forests."<sup>27</sup> The trials the hero must endure happen in an undefined place, "somewhere," such as "in a deep forest"<sup>28</sup> or at a castle "to which one must travel for much time."<sup>29</sup>

Despite the descriptions of the great distances Tandareis must travel, it is not a problem for the knight to return regularly, in disguise, to Arthur's court. The space that is depicted is not plausible nor does it resemble the real world. This observation is especially true for the world outside of Tandareis's home at court – this realm is an incredible space the purpose of which is to play the backdrop to fantastic adventures. As we have already demonstrated, the motif of fantastical space is still employed to a significant extent in the *Chronicle of Bruncvik*, where foreign lands – here personified as maidens called Europe and Africa and a castle known as Arabia – are depicted as fantastical countries full of supernatural dangers.

The author of the *Chronicle of Melusine*, however, conceives of space in a thoroughly different manner. Even the world beyond the boundaries of home ceases to be uncertain. Melusine's home is located in France, in the vicinity of Poitiers, where Raymond establishes the Castle of Lusigne (called *Luzina* in the Czech version of the chronicle), which can clearly be identified as Lusignan in Poitou. The narrator of the story convincingly uses references to the names of places in the foreign lands to which Melusine's sons travel to undergo their trials. Melusine's first two sons come to the aid of the king of Cyprus, after whose death the oldest of ten brothers becomes the king of Cyprus. His brother gained the royal crown in Armenia. The story of Melusine's sons, Anthony and Reinhart, is likewise topographically situated. The heroes, one of whom bears a lion's mark and the other has only one eye situated in the middle of the forehead, accomplished great deeds in Luxemburg. A Luxemburg princess rewards Anthony for his valiance, marrying him. Reinhart wins the hand of a Czech princess when he comes to the aid of Prague, which was besieged by the Turks. Even though the brothers who share Melusine's blood are described as fighting against the

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<sup>27</sup> "Tandariáš a Floribella" (see note 6), 266.

<sup>28</sup> "Tandariáš a Floribella" (see note 6), 272.

<sup>29</sup> "Tandariáš a Floribella" (see note 6), 275.

Turks in Bohemia, a completely ahistorical event, the core of the chapter focuses on the negotiations between the Bohemian lords, the princess, and Reinhart, who is finally crowned king of Bohemia. Besides the mentioned stories, in which members of Raymond's and Melusine's lineage stack up royal titles, the narrative contains other topographical details about Geoffrey's travels, such as Raymond's penitential pilgrimage to Rome after the betrayal of Melusine, and so forth.

Let us next examine the territorial gains of Melusine's sons. The adventure time-space that I have already explicated using *Tandareis* as an example underwent a radical transformation in the genre of the dynastic chronicle. It turned into a *travel chronotope*. The vague destinations of the court romance were replaced with exact locations that have real-world counterparts, meaning that there is a new dimension of the time-space continuum within the framework of movement by the individual protagonist.

What does this imply? I have described the transformation of the narrative time in dynastic chronicles as following the temporal framework of the dynasty (Bruncvik replaces Stilfrid; Melusine's sons, and grandsons take Raymond's place). Likewise, we can describe the space depicted in the *Chronicle of Melusine* as an expression of the discovery of "dynastic space." First, I will attempt to identify the reasons for this change, basing my considerations on the historical context.

In *Karl IV.: Ein Kaiser in Europa 1346 bis 1378*, Ferdinand Seibt considers the medieval image of the world and examines the transformations it underwent in the fourteenth century, when the perception of space began to move closer to our contemporary understanding of the world, as demonstrated, for instance, by the emergence of innovative maps and even a globe.<sup>30</sup> According to Seibt, the most typical phenomenon at the turn of the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries was the rise of the European periphery. Besides the fact that important rulers appeared in previously peripheral areas of Europe, such as Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, Denmark, the Kingdom of Spain, and the State of the Teutonic Order, these regions were also put on the political power map of Europe; in other words, they became an important part of the dynastic-territorial plans of all the major political players in Europe. Dynastic marriages, which could help ruling families achieve political success, were characteristic of the fourteenth century. The Luxemburgs applied this strategy as well; when John of Luxemburg wed Elizabeth of Bohemia, heir to the Kingdom of Bohemia, his family gained a base of power in Central Europe. In the fourteenth century, to which we can trace back

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<sup>30</sup> Ferdinand Seibt, *Karl IV.: Ein Kaiser in Europa; 1346 – 1378* (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1978), 9–25.

the beginnings of tales about Bruncvik and Melusine, space became a unique and valuable commodity that every European monarch sought to accumulate.

Perhaps we could consider this period, when people were slowly coming to accept the importance and value of space, as a precondition for the emergence of texts such as the *Chronicle of Melusine*, in which foreign lands cease to be realms of imaginary creatures and become recognizable landscapes with real topographical features. However, as a literary scholar drawing heavily on semiotic methods, I do not follow this logic. I do not understand the historical cultural milieu only as a precondition for the emergence of these texts, but rather as a product of these texts. The narrative of the *Chronicle of Melusine* depicts space in a manner that we do not find in the older chivalric epics. Among other things, it enumerates methods for making territorial gains, whether through warfare or marriage. The *Chronicle of Melusine* portrays dynastic space, or the spatial expansion of a dynasty as places that could be traveled to. Even though the oldest recorded Czech version of *Melusine* was published in 1555 and even though Thüring's German precursor first appeared in 1456,<sup>31</sup> I think that the depiction of space and the travel chronotope that is employed in the narrative bears the traces of the changes in spatial perception that were born in the fourteenth century.

In approximately 1400, *The Travels of John Mandeville* were finally translated by "Vavřinec, servant to the His Highest Duke, Roman, and Bohemian King Wenceslaus, from the German tongue to the Czech."<sup>32</sup> This fictive travelogue and the slightly later Czech translation of *The Travels of Marco Polo* are further evidence that portrayals of distant lands were no longer the product of the imagination. Readers now desired a greater degree of mimesis, that is, they demanded a more verisimilar description of foreign lands, even in works outside of the travel genre.

## Changing Notions of the Personification of Space

Personifying the abstract was one of the most common literary devices in the repertoire of many late antique and medieval authors (e.g., Boethius, Guillaume de Lorris, Jean de Meung, William Langland, Geoffrey Chaucer, Johannes von Tepl). In the previous section, I focused on the way in which real places were personified. The *Chronicle of Bruncvik* and the *Chronicle of Melusine* feature Europe personified as a fish maiden, Africa as a serpent maiden, and Palestine as Melusine's

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<sup>31</sup> Classen, *The German Volksbuch* (see note 13), 141.

<sup>32</sup> *Cestopis tzv. Mandevilla*, ed. František Šimek. *Živá díla minulosti*, 32 (Prague: Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury a umění, 1963), 21.

sister. Melusine and Melior personify the natural order. Violating this order means breaking a taboo, and thus a punishment must follow. A sufficient amount of attention has been devoted to this interpretation of the story of Melusine in the scholarly literature. The story of Melusine emphasizes female “otherness,” which has been recently interpreted by Jan Shaw as a force that needs to be honored and protected.<sup>33</sup> Jacques Le Goff directly identified this force with success and the economic rise of the Lusignans.<sup>34</sup> By contrast, I will subsequently concentrate exclusively on the personification of real places in Europe, Africa, and Palestine.

I have already stated that depicting concrete topographical features through personification is a more mimetic approach than the way how places are portrayed in the chivalric literature of the preceding era. On the other hand, there is also a clear difference between this literature and the later chapbooks of the sixteenth century (*Fortunatus, Faustus*), which maintain a closer relationship to topographical reality. Thus, personification seems to be a less verisimilar method of depicting reality. How then do I understand mimesis in the case of spatial personification?

Personification is one of the fundamental rhetorical devices, classically known as *prosopopeia*. According to Plato, *prosopa* means “faces” or “masks,” that is, “*dramatis personae*.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, personification was first discovered by Greek drama, in which the impersonal was imitated by a character played by an actor. In this sense, I understand personification as a mimetic phenomenon: reality – in this case, spatial reality – is portrayed through a character.

But the question arises of how the late-medieval person understood the characters of Europe, Africa, and Palestine. According to medievalist Jaroslav Kolár, in the “descriptions of Bruncvik’s adventurous journeys mentions of monstrous people and animals began to become an expression of the medieval idea of the world and nature.”<sup>36</sup> There is no doubt that people living on the cusp of the Middle Ages and Renaissance Humanism believed in, or at the very least told stories about, the existence of creatures similar to the maidens of Europe, Africa, and Melusine. For example, in the so-called *Prostějov Collection* [*Prostějovský sborník*],<sup>37</sup> which contains a collection of Sebastian Brant’s (d. 1521) fables and

33 Jan Shaw, *Space, Gender, and Memory in the Middle English Romance. Architectures of Wonder in Melusine*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

34 Le Goff, “Melusine: Mother and Pioneer” (see note 25).

35 James J. Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification*. Literature, Culture, Theory, 6 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 13.

36 Kolár, *Česká zábavná próza 16. století a tzv. knížky lidového čtení* (see note 12), 49.

37 Jana Albína *Ezopovy fabule a Brantovy rozprávky. Dle sborníku Prostějovského z r. 1557*. Sběrka pramenův ku poznání literárního života v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku, ed. A. Truhlář (Prague: Česká akademie císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy slovesnost a umění, 1901).



stories translated into Czech, mostly by the humanist Jan Albín Vrchbělský (d. 1551), one can encounter the tale “On Strange Unnatural Births and Calving and on Sea Creatures” (Czech orig. “O divných proti přirození porodech a teleních, a o mořských potvorách”) in a section entitled “Stories Compiled and Collected in Diverse Places.”

This tale recounts the story of a “sea creature” that “had a human body to the belly button, below which it had a fish’s tail.”<sup>38</sup> This creature, however, is not depicted as a sublime fairy; although it is fearsome (“it was horrible to behold”), it is also vanquished by women, who “killed it with staffs and sticks,” so it could then be taken as an attraction and “shown to the people.”<sup>39</sup> At the time when Albín’s translations were published, it is clear that the story was told as a “diverting tale” and that the fish maiden is depicted as a curiosity whose purpose is to draw attention and to entertain. The character is described as an incredible being: readers and audiences might hesitate and wonder about whether the existence of such a creature is possible. But what is important is that this monster is depicted as a creature of nature, as evidence that the world is inhabited by unimaginable beings.

I think that we must understand the depictions of Europe, the fish maiden, and Africa, the serpent maiden, in a similar manner. They are incredible creatures, natural phenomena. They are beautiful but at the same time monstrous. For the author of *Bruncvik*, Europe and Africa are lands, part of the Earth, part of God’s creation, which, although beautiful, is also monstrously enormous and, for man, unknowable in its entirety.<sup>40</sup> The author of the *Chronicle of Bruncvik* did not view Europe and Africa as political or state formations (as we might understand the term Europe today). He regarded them as physical and natural spaces, which to a certain extent could be subjugated and could be lived in harmoniously – like a man with a woman.

In the *Chronicle of Melusine*, Melusine, Melior, and their mother, Presine are depicted similarly to Europe and Africa. They denote the power of nature. The semantics of *Palestine*, however, is slightly different. This name does not just refer to a geographical entity (with immense mythical and religious significance), but to a political space as well, as I have described above in the section on the transformation of the medieval image of the world. Palestine is also a country

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38 Jana Albína *Ezopovy fabule a Brantovy rozprávky* (see note 37), 268.

39 Jana Albína *Ezopovy fabule a Brantovy rozprávky* (see note 37), 268.

40 For the concept of medieval monsters as God’s creations including the understanding of the beauty of monsters in the conception of St. Augustine see, e.g., Lisa Verner, *The Epistemology of the Monstrous in the Middle Ages*. Studies in Medieval History and Culture, 33 (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1–10.

in the political sense (as we generally understand it today). This term refers to a place on which the descendants of Melusine made political claims.

I am convinced that the changes in personification methods, which we can easily observe in dynastic chronicles, perfectly reflect shifts in the perception of real places. Therefore, we have the opportunity to study thoroughly the transformation of the semiotic mechanisms of medieval and early-modern people. Writers gradually discovered new functions of depicted places. In the older court literature, places serve as merely abstract exotic backdrops for adventure (such as India in the *Tandareis* romance). But geography slowly took on more realistic contours and began to be depicted as specific, real places that reflected the political interests of contemporary society.

I shall now examine other possibilities for “topographic” personification in another genre of medieval literature.

## Personification of Real Space Outside of Dynastic Chronicles: The Example of Hussite Debate Poems

In the Czech literature of the Hussite era, versified compositions were created that could be classified as belonging to the genre of dialogue, or debate poetry. Understandably, the religious, political, and social events that rocked the Kingdom of Bohemia after the burning at the stake of Church reformer Jan Hus at the Council of Constance (1415) and after the death of King Wenceslaus IV of Luxemburg (1419) exerted a fundamental influence on contemporary literature. Likewise, the heightened sectarian conflicts of the era supported the popularity of debate poetry as a genre. The conflict between Hussitism and Catholicism is recorded in *The Quarrel between Prague and Kutná Hora* (Czech orig. *Hádání Prahy s Kutnou Horou*).<sup>41</sup> But why am I writing about it? This debate poem uses the same rhetorical method that we can find in *Bruncvík* and *Melusine*: the personification of real topography. I will try to analyze these works more deeply to understand what other functions this type of personification plays in medieval literature.

In *The Quarrel between Prague and Kutná Hora*, the author clearly sides with Hussite Prague. The debate is held before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and Prague is presented as a “beautiful woman without flaw, with bright eyes and wise words,” whereas Kutná Hora is depicted as an old “hunched woman, looking to

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41 “Hádání Prahy s Kutnou Horou,” *Husitské skladby Budyšínského rukopisu*, ed. Jiří Daňhelka. Památky staré literatury české (Prague: Orbis, 1952).

the ground, half blind and murmuring ... muttering, and shaking her head.”<sup>42</sup> Understandably, the core of the poem is a dialogue that serves political and religious propaganda purposes, but nonetheless the poet maintains the frame of a discourse between two women, in which Prague strongly rebukes Kutná Hora, who unconvincingly defends herself. The narrative frame is a mere backdrop for the conversation between these two irreconcilable protagonists, but nonetheless there are the occasional mentions of how Kutná Hora “frowns”<sup>43</sup> and “gnashes her teeth,”<sup>44</sup> whereas Prague “rationally responds.”<sup>45</sup> Another debate poem, *Václav, Havel, and Tábor, or a Discourse on Bohemia of the Year 1424* (Czech orig. *Václav, Havel a Tábor čili Rozmlouvání o Čechách roku 1424*), which emerged slightly later as a defense of Czech Catholicism, is similarly conceived. In it, Václav, a character named after the first Czech saint, personifies Catholicism. His protagonist is Tábor, a man named after the Hussite town and a symbol of radical Hussitism.<sup>46</sup> They are seconded by the flighty Havel, who may be understood as an impartial fence-sitter or as a “political formation of the Saint Havel coalition,” as suggested by David Tomíček in an inspiring article.<sup>47</sup> For us, the most interesting figure is the personification of Tábor, who is described as a pale fool, who “stands with a club and loudly shouts [and] has a deformed face.”<sup>48</sup> Whereas Václav protects New Testament love and mercy, Tábor exhorts violence.

Although we can read these compositions as political writings of the Hussite era, both debate poems provide evidence that the personification of specific places was one of the most common forms of literary expression in the fifteenth century. The authors of these debate poems certainly resorted to this genre because they could use it to mask an otherwise political message behind occasional and entertaining literature. They depicted religious and political strife as a quarrel between cities personified as both women and men; the authors’ own political beliefs were cloaked in a simple allegory about divine judgment.

Now, to conclude this tangent on Hussite literature: I do not aim to interpret these two poetic compositions any further, which are of an entirely different literary genre than dynastic chronicles. I have merely attempted to provide more evidence to support the idea that the personification of specific places was one of

42 “Hádání Prahy s Kutnou Horou” (see note 41), 36.

43 “Hádání Prahy s Kutnou Horou” (see note 41), 121.

44 “Hádání Prahy s Kutnou Horou” (see note 41), 125.

45 “Hádání Prahy s Kutnou Horou” (see note 41), 130.

46 “Protihusitské skladby,” *Výbor z české literatury doby husitské*, sv. 1, ed. B. Havránek, J. Hrabák, J. Daňhelka (Prague: Nakladatelství ČSAV, 1963), 391–96.

47 David Tomíček, “Svatohavelská jednota (K interpretaci veršované skladby Václav, Havel a Tábor čili Rozmlouvání o Čechách),” *Zpravodaj katedry bohemistiky* 11.2 (2001): 10–14.

48 “Protihusitské skladby” (see note 46), 391.

the most vital methods of late-medieval literature. I do not seek out any close connections between the individual texts; I do not consider them as being directly related. On the other hand, I am convinced that these examples tell us much about the semiotics of late-medieval personification. They persuasively illustrate the shift of personification from the abstract and the general to the particular and the singular.<sup>49</sup>

In *Bruncvik*, Europe and Africa still seem to personify something big and abstract – these two continents are in their entirety unknowable and ambiguous, and therefore their personification as half-human, half-beast creatures has a double meaning. The name of Palestine, as a semiotic sign, contains identical mythological ambiguity – it is a mysterious and sacred creature,<sup>50</sup> but at the same time, it is clear that this term is also a toponym that indirectly refers to a territory claimed by the descendants of Melusine. Contemporary political connotations found their way into the name. The seeping in of current meaning is typical of Hussite literature. The figures of the old lady Kutná Hora and the beautiful woman Prague do not allow any other semantic interpretation than a political one. The authors of these Hussite compositions used literary devices to mask their true objectives, which lay not in the world of art but in the world of politics. In order to do so, they did not need ambivalent meanings, complicated devices, or the mask of allegory. They simply chose to personify places because it was a commonly used device in contemporary literature.

## Conclusion

Here I have attempted to describe how the categories of time and space changed in one type of medieval narrative. Late-medieval dynastic chronicles employed some elements of the adventure chronotope, but in many regards they also introduced fundamental innovations. They are clearly visible in the perception of time, which began to demonstrate a higher level of mimesis. Narrators incorporated the chronicle keeper's perception of time and provided thorough information about the exact timing of events. The depicted time also begins to surpass the lifetime of one hero. Dynastic time appears in which generations succeed each

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<sup>49</sup> Ladislav Cejp, *Metody středověké alegorie a Langlandův Petr Oráč* (Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1961), 43.

<sup>50</sup> In other words, the significance of the dynasty is thus not only derived from the sacred ancestor, but also from the connection with the Holy Land, which has not only a mythical and religious, but also a political significance.

other, with each struggling to be granted fortune's favor, which is always temporary. Unlike, for example, German Grail romances (which recount stories across generations), in the studied works temporality is more closely linked with the present because the heroes directly represent the ruling dynasty (*Bruncvik* and *Melusine* were originally created as allegories celebrating the power and glory of Luxemburg-dynasty rulers).

Space also undergoes a significant transformation. It stops playing the unimportant role of the setting of events. It is depicted with a greater degree of specification (Bohemia and Prague in *Stilfrid* and *Bruncvik*, the kingdoms gained in *Melusine*). The periphery ceases to be a fantastical realm in which the heroes undergo trials<sup>51</sup>; instead it becomes a concrete territory into which the heroes attempt to expand their political power.

In the second half of this essay, I focused my attention on the semantics of the characters in dynastic chronicles. Female characters are depicted ambiguously – on the literal level, they are heroes of the story; however, on the non-literal level, the contours of other meanings appear, which reflect the current interests of the authors. This observation is the least true of the *Chronicle of Bruncvik*, in which the subjugation of Europe and Africa serves to boost the importance of the ruler of Bohemia. On the non-literal plane, the characters in the *Chronicle of Melusine* personify on the one hand the abstract power of nature, and on the other – through the character of Palestine – a specific place that is claimed by Melusine's descendants as the inheritance of their lineage. As Hussite literature illustrates, over time the personification of specific places gradually turned into a routine literary method – in Czech Hussite literature it turned into a mere marker of literariness when the true objectives of the author lay beyond the realm of the literary arts.

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<sup>51</sup> In the medieval Czech chivalric narrative, space has only one function – it is the backdrop to adventure. This understanding does not apply across the board in all medieval genres, of course. For example, in the Icelandic sagas, dynastic time measured in generations and geographic space described with greater concreteness are both important, if not fundamental elements, of composition.

David Tomíček

## Miracles, Marvels, and the Plague in the Czech-Written Travelogue by Christopher Harant of Polžice and Bezdrůžice (1564–1621)

Although the geographic horizons of the Europeans dramatically changed at the beginning of the early modern times due to the Portuguese, Spanish, and then also English and Dutch discoverers and their pioneering travels, the Middle-Eastern world retained its extraordinary attraction concerning the occurrence of objects, substances, places, and natural phenomena from those areas filled with *mirabilia* and *miracula*.<sup>1</sup> The definition of these two categories was developed in the high Middle Ages by the erudite writer Gervasius of Tilbury (ca. 1150–1220) in his work *Otia imperialia* (*The Recreation of an Emperor*). The author opines that the latter category encompasses phenomena working against Nature, while the first includes those beyond human comprehension, no matter how natural they might be. The first group, then, is marvels, the latter group is miracles; the two, however, have something in common: they both include phenomena the expressions of which make people astonished.<sup>2</sup> Especially the region of the so-called Holy Land was for centuries viewed as an extraordinary destination for pilgrimages.<sup>3</sup>

To medieval geographers, Jerusalem was the center of the world, and an equally central position was ascribed to it on medieval maps.<sup>4</sup> Egypt, too, was perceived as a

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1 Surekha Davies, “The Wondrous East in the Renaissance Geographical Imagination: Marco Polo, Fra Mauro, and Giovanni Battista Ramusio,” *History and Anthropology* 23.2 (2013): 215–34; here 217.

2 “Ex hiis, duo proueniunt: miracula et mirabilia, cum utrorumque finis sit admiratio. Porro miracula dicimus usitatus que preter naturam diuine uirtuti ascribimus, ut cum uirgo parit, cum Lazarus resurgit, cum lapsa membra reintegantur. Mirabilia uero dicimus que nostre cognicioni non subiacent, etiam cum sunt naturalia; sed et mirabilia constituit ignorantia reddende rationis quare sic sit.” Quoted from Gervasius of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia*, ed. S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 558. See also Michelle Karnes, “Marvels in the Medieval Imagination,” *Speculum* 90.2 (2015): 327–65; Caroline Walker Bynum, “Wonder,” *Americal Historical Review* 102.1 (1997): 1–26; Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 9–20.

3 Marie-Luise Favreau-Lilie, “The German Empire and Palestine: German Pilgrimages to Jerusalem Between the 12th and 16th Century,” *Journal of Medieval History* 21.4 (1995): 321–41.

4 Richard G. Newhauser, “Jerusalem,” *Trade, Travel, and Exploration in the Middle Ages*, ed. John Block Friedman and Kristen Mossler Figg (New York and London: Routledge, Taylor and

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region closely linked with the history of the Israelites and, simultaneously, as a land offering admirable evidence about the power and grandeur of the ancient kingdoms. The significance of Egypt was later even more augmented by the Renaissance fascination with hermetism.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the Holy Land and Egypt represented an exotic space abounding in miracles and marvels, being closely familiar to the Europeans via textual tradition, political and business contacts, and personal testimonies.

It was exactly the Holy Land and Egypt which were visited in 1598 by a duo of Bohemian aristocrats, Hermann Czernin of Chudenice and Christopher Harant of Polžice and Bezručice. The more well-known of the two, the intellectual and diplomat Christopher Harant, provided a report about the accomplished journey in his comprehensive Czech-language travelogue, *Putování aneb cesta (Pilgrimage alias Wandering)*, first printed in 1608.<sup>6</sup> Its German version came out, at the care of Harant's nephew, in 1678 as *Der Christliche Ulysses (The Christian Odyssey)*.<sup>7</sup> Czech historians mainly commemorate Harant in connection with the infamous execution of the twenty-seven leaders of the Estates' uprising against the rulers of the Habsburg dynasty, which launched the Thirty Years' War. He was beheaded upon the Emperor's order as the third one on the list on 21 June 1621.<sup>8</sup>

The present essay will discuss Harant's travelogue as a reflection of the early seventeenth-century intellectual milieu in Prague, with special focus on the issues related to the contemporary natural history and medicine. In the context of the two disciplines, it will pay close attention to the phenomena of *mirabilia* and *miracula* categories, and to the danger of being infected by the plague and to the possible measures to protect oneself against it.

Religious reasons were undoubtedly the leading motivation for Harant's journey. The Holy Land and the places linked with the life and death of Jesus Christ

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Francis Group, 2000), 300–02. See also Scott D. Westrem, *The Hereford Map. A Transcription and Translation of the Legends with Commentary* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 166–67.

5 Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 1–19.

6 Kryštof Harant z Polžic a Bezručic, *Putování aneb cesta z Království českého do města Benátek. Odtud po moři do Svaté země, země Judské a dále do Egypta a velikého města Kairu. Potom na horu Oreb, Sinai a svaté panny Kateřiny, v pusté Arábii ležící, na dva díly rozdělená* (Prague: dědicové Daniela Adama z Veleslavína, 1608).

7 Johann Georg Harant z Polžic a Bezručic, *Der Christliche Ulysses oder Weit-versuchte Cavalier fargestellt In der Denckwürdigen Bereisung So wol deß Heiligen Landes, als vieler andrer morgenländischer Provintzen. Landschaften und berühmter Städte* (Nuremberg: Wolfgang Moritz Endter, 1678).

8 Marie Koldínská, *Kryštof Harant z Polžic a Bezručic. Cesta intelektuála k popravišti* (Prague and Litomyšl: Paseka, 2004), 404–408. See also Josef Petráň, *Staroměstská exekuce* (Prague: Mladá Fronta, 1985), 257; Radek Fukala, *Konec zimního království a poslední ohniska odporu* (České Budějovice: Veduta, 2016), 74–77.

became the most exclusive pilgrimage destinations as early as in the Middle Ages, as did Egypt and its St. Catherine monastery at Sinai.<sup>9</sup> The character of Harant's work nevertheless indicates that this Renaissance intellectual was also highly motivated by the desire to learn and, perhaps, to satisfy his curiosity. Harant was writing the text during his sojourn at the Prague court of the Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolf II.<sup>10</sup> Prague Castle at that time was a place where the ruler accumulated outstanding collections of art, memorabilia, and rarities from nature.<sup>11</sup> Harant in his treatise voiced several compliments on the emperor's fondness for exotic animals and plants, thus, for example, informing readers that the castle gardens were at that time overgrown by the then precious and exotic aloe plants<sup>12</sup> and inhabited by ostriches.<sup>13</sup>

Harant also had access to the emperor's private *Kunstkammer* when compiling his travelogue – and its collections largely helped him polish the manuscript. Sailing around the Crete island, he was fascinated by the winged flying fish and, upon his return, he, in his own words, received the emperor's permission to study specimens of these animals in the Prague collections which served him as a model for drawing the flying fish that is illustrated in the text.<sup>14</sup> The imperial collections were probably more helpful than Harant would apparently admit in his writing. Rather symptomatic in this context is the picture of the Egyptian pyramids, reminiscent of a sort of pyramidal obelisks more than anything else.<sup>15</sup> It is highly probable that the Bohemian traveler actually did not see the structures in person and learned about their real appearance only back in his homeland. A possible source of inspiration for Harant's travelogue illustration could be the *Kosmografie česká* (*Bohemian Cosmography*), a translation of the widely known encyclopedia by Sebastian Münster, published in Prague in 1554, which also contains images of the given relics in the form of narrow pyramids.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*. European Culture and Society (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 143–44.

<sup>10</sup> Koldínská, *Kryštof Harant* (see note 8), 229–60.

<sup>11</sup> Beket Bukovinská, "The Known and Unknown *Kunstkammer* of Rudolf II," *Collection, Laboratory, Theater: Scenec of Knowledge in the 17th Century*, ed. Helmar Schramm, Ludger Schwarte and Jan Lazardzig, *Theatrum Scientiarum*, 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 199–226. See also: Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, "Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The *Kunstkammer* as a Form of Representatio," *Art Journal* 38.1 (1978): 22–28. Florike Egmond, *Eye for Detail. Images of Plants and Animals in Art and Science 1500–1630* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017), 22–48.

<sup>12</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 123.

<sup>13</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 127.

<sup>14</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 74–75.

<sup>15</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 197.

<sup>16</sup> Zikmund mladší z Püchova, *Kosmografia česká. To jest vypsání o položení krajin neb zemí i obyčejích národuv všeho světa* (Prague: Jan Kosořský z Kosoře, 1554), 130r.



Naturally, there is the question of how exactly the final tone of the discussed piece of literature mirrored the intellectual atmosphere of the Prague court, the content of the local collections and the emperor's own interests. The text by Harant indeed teems with discussions of most varied products of nature, and they are far from merely concerning the Holy Land or, eventually, Egypt. One of the first places where the group of travelers decided to stop after crossing the border of the Bohemian kingdom was the Bavarian city of Landsbut. Harant reported about the local castle that its park was overgrown with various marvelous herbs.<sup>17</sup> In the Italian city of Padua, he could not omit visiting its botanical garden, which at that time ranked among the most legendary establishments of its kind. Botanical gardens, along with anatomic dissecting rooms and astronomy observatories, can be seen as new types of educational spaces promoted by the early modern-time universities.<sup>18</sup> The splendorous Padua garden was founded in 1545 and has hitherto been perceived as the earliest university botanical garden in Europe.<sup>19</sup> Harant reports that it was designed to introduce students of medicine and pharmacy to both local and exotic curative herbs.<sup>20</sup> He writes that lecturing in botany in the garden was carried out twice a week and that each session was headed by either one of the two local professors. As to the professor's chair, Padua University held a primacy as well, since the position of professor of botany was installed there for the first time as early as in 1533.<sup>21</sup> Christopher Harant was so mesmerized by the garden that he even transcribed the visitor's regulations, stated above the entrance gate, in his book.<sup>22</sup>

Harant would not cease paying close attention to various wonders of Nature during the next course of his wandering, either. For example, he writes about the then already abandoned St. Nicholas monastery on Cyprus. Thirty years ago, he informs us, the place was populated by a community of monks who were however, heavily troubled by vast colonies of venomous snakes proliferating in the close vicinity. The monks attempted to fight the danger by obtaining cats, which they successfully trained in annihilating the reptiles. The travelogue highlights that the

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<sup>17</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Paula Findlen, "Anatomy Theaters, Botanical Gardens, and Natural History Collections," *The Cambridge History of Science III*, ed. Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 272–89.

<sup>19</sup> Maurizio Rippa Bonnati and Vittorio Dal Piaz, "The Design and Form of the Padua Horto Medicinale," *The Botanical Garden of Padua 1545–1995*, ed. Alessandro Minelli (Venice: Marsilio Pub., 1995), 33–55.

<sup>20</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 51.

<sup>21</sup> Frederick Gregory, *Natural Sciences in Western History* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 76.

<sup>22</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 50–51.

cats indeed learned to do their job, but would not eat the animals, always returning to within the monastery's walls to be fed. However, one day or another, they started an outbreak of plague, reportedly disseminated by the undesired creatures, in the establishment, which eventually resulted in the community's extinction.<sup>23</sup>

The author of the above-mentioned *Bohemian Cosmography*, too, was obviously well aware of the island of Cyprus as a place infested with vast colonies of venomous snakes, mentioning an unnamed monastery where cats spend their time chasing snakes all around and return home to their dishfuls as soon as they hear the monastery's bell ring.<sup>24</sup> The book even mentions venomous snakes in connection with the local deer, stating it is in their nature to lurk at the snakes' caches to hunt them. In this context, it even recommends burning powdered deer horns at places that require special protection against the dangerous reptiles.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the use of deer-horn powder as an excellent antidote can be found in the Czech-language herbal *Kníha lékařská (Medical Book)* by Jan Černý.<sup>26</sup>

Continental imagination in the given era thus knew Cyprus as a place famous for its venomous snakes. Harant nevertheless somehow exaggerated the depiction of the unfortunate reality there when telling his readers that it was exactly the so efficient monastery cats that infected the holy place with plague, apparently associated with the poison produced by the local snakes. His depiction of Crete, then, is similarly overstated.

The *Bohemian Cosmography* claims that the island does not host any venomous snakes at all and, without more details, rather also states paradoxically that anytime Cretan women hurt someone with their teeth or nails, the attacked person is doomed to die.<sup>27</sup> Christopher Harant must undoubtedly have been aware of these 'facts,' for he does mention them in his book of travels. He, however, adds that he had spotted a snake on the island in person, while a local hermit reassured him that although snakes do live there, they are anything but venomous. The information as to the local women capable of mortally wounding their victims with their nails or teeth can be found in the travelogue as well, and it even explicitly refers to Münster's cosmographic treatise in this respect. Harant, however, interprets the given 'fact' in a rather peculiar way: if it is not the snakes that are venomous there, it is the women. If they see red and either scratch or bite a member of the opposite sex, the man dies unless he promptly takes an effective antidote.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 89–90.

<sup>24</sup> *Kosmografie česká* (see note 16), 41v.

<sup>25</sup> *Kosmografie česká* (see note 16), 41r.

<sup>26</sup> Jan Černý, *Kníha lékařská* (Nuremberg: Nicolaus Claudian, 1517), 35v.

<sup>27</sup> *Kosmografie česká* (see note 16), 551v.

<sup>28</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 86.

The quirky way of Harant's reporting about Crete and Cyprus seems to testify that the Bohemian aristocrat was well familiar with contemporary medicinal discourse and was interested in the theories concerning the plague infection. In 1598, the physician Bartholomeus Schwalb published a rather brief treatise on protection against the plague, *Nařízení a správa kratičká* (*Enactment and a Very Brief Report*), primarily aimed at the inhabitants of Prague. The print warns against stray dogs and cats and recommends extirpating them at times of epidemic for they may spread contagion which Schwalb, in accord with the predominant opinion of doctors, simply calls poison.<sup>29</sup> Schwalb's view of the role of animals in disseminating infection was in no way new; the same was also claimed by some medieval authors. For example, as early as in 1340, the Trento bishop and physician, Augustin, described unspecified animals breathing in poisonous vapors, therefore facilitating their dissemination with their own breath and menacing both other animals and people living around.<sup>30</sup>

The anonymous *Questio medica* (*Medical Question*), dating to the late fourteenth century, too, also discusses the issues linked with transferring contagion from animals to humans. The author admits that an animal can act as a carrier in the process, concluding that although the human body is more highbred in its disposition, it is simultaneously weaker in its nature, and can thus be harmed by even what animals are able to endure.<sup>31</sup>

The conviction as to the existence of women-carriers inhabiting bodies infused with poison through and through was not strange to medieval medical literature, either. The *Epistola de cautela a venenis* (*Epistle on Protection against Intoxication*) by Johannes Hacke, an author active toward the late first half of the fourteenth century, mentions a girl from Italy who had been taking poison for so long as to make it part of her nature. She then reportedly served the substance purposely and regularly to other maidens to develop a host of toxic, but poison-immune murderesses capable of intoxicating and killing their lovers – some unspecified kings in Hacke's narrative – during coitus.<sup>32</sup> The story was recalled

<sup>29</sup> Bartholomeus Schwalb, *Nařízení a správa kratičká* (Prague: Daniel Adam z Veleslavína, 1598), B<sub>3</sub>r.

<sup>30</sup> "Quidem animalia attrahunt vapores corruptos et sic attrahendo animalia et homines inficiuntur quia varie infirmitates inde generantur ex vaporibus corrupti." Quoted from Lynn Thorndike, "A Pest Tractate before the Black Death," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 23 (1930): 346–56; here 351.

<sup>31</sup> "Inter omnia animalia homo est nobilioris et debilioris nature, igitur non ledit bruta, homines ledere potest." Quoted from Karl Sudhoff, "Pestschriften aus den ersten 150 Jahren nach der Epidemie des 'schwarzen Todes' 1348," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 11 (1918): 1–120; here 50.

<sup>32</sup> "Hoc docuit et sic nutrit quasdam puellas, ut per earum coitum interficerent reges." Quoted from Milada Říhová, Dana Stehlíková and David Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře Karla IV. a Jana Lucemburského* (Prague and Litomyšl: Paseka, 2010), 82.

in the mid-fifteenth century by the Italian physician, Bartolomeo de Sancta Sofia, to help him document that a person can indeed be plague-infected and at the same time spread the disease without falling ill.<sup>33</sup> Christopher Harant mentioned a similar motif of an inwardly poisoned person once again in connection with the narration on an anonymous king of Cambaya (Khambhat, India). The ruler of the distant exotic land would allegedly consume virulent roots which allowed him to use his breath to kill, but otherwise stayed untouched by the root poison.<sup>34</sup>

The intense preoccupation with poisons and antidotes, moreover, made Harant remark about a tiny snake, Tyrus, which, according to the *Bohemian Cosmography*, proliferated around the city of Jericho and whose bite was fatal.<sup>35</sup> The blind specimen, boasting of yet another reported physiognomic oddity in the form of a hairy head, gained renown for its qualities as early as in the Middle Ages. It is, for instance, mentioned in the chronicle *Historia orientalis (Oriental History)* by Jacques de Vitry (ca. 1160/70–1240) who wrote that its meat combined with other substances serves to make an electuary called *tyriaca*, a potion immensely effective against all poisons except those generated by the given snake.<sup>36</sup>

Thomas of Cantimpré (1201–1272), in his encyclopedia *De natura rerum* (On Nature), attached rather remarkable information to the animal, stating that its venom had not been antidotal up to Christ's martyrdom: the legend, he claims, has it that one of the snakes was hung onto His cross by His side, and then contact with the blood of the Savior transformed the entire genus and granted it those admirable qualities.<sup>37</sup> Harant's information on the reptile was adopted from the

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33 "Item notandum ultimo, quod possibile est, quod aliquis sit infectus et non paciatur et iste tam inficit alios et tales moriuntur a peste." Quoted from Karl Sudhoff, "Pestschriften aus den ersten 150 Jahren nach der Epidemie des 'schwarzen Todes' 1348," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 6 (1913): 313–79; here 352.

34 Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 162.

35 *Kosmografie česká* (see note 16), 48v.

36 "Ex cuius carnibus cum quibusdam que illis admiscentur, fit confectio quedam quasi electuarium, que dicitur tyriaca, omne venenum in corpore humano superans et extinguens. Cum autem contra omne aliud venenum valeat, contra predicti tiri venenum nihil prodest." Quoted from Jonathan Rubin, "The Use of the 'Jericho Tirus' in Theriac: A Case Study in the History of the Exchanges of Medical Knowledge between Western Europe and the Realm of Islam in the Middle Ages," *Medieval Age* 83.2 (2014): 234–53; here 235.

37 "Contigisse autem ipso die qua Christus in cruce suspensus est unum ex hiis serpentibus infestatissimum circa partes Jerusalem comprehensum et ad latus Christi in cruce suspensum et ex lila die omne genus ipsius serpentis suscepisse virtutem in effusione sanguinis Christi remedium efficacissimum contra omne venenum." Quoted from Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), 548.

Czech-language *Cosmography*, and the author adds that the theriac made out of its body is being imported by Arabs to Cairo and sold very dearly there.<sup>38</sup>

The discussed travelogue situated the occurrence of Tyrus in the area around the Dead Sea, which the author describes as enormously poisonous. He literally writes that it is dreadful and piteous to watch the surface of this inland water continuously evaporating a black, fetid, and noxious haze. Harant had the opportunity to visit this sea and wondered at its extreme salinity, writing that all objects can simply float on its surface, unable to dive any deeper, adding that the sea is called “dead” since no animal would survive either in it or in its close vicinity. He claims, moreover, that the toxicity of the sea vapors is so intense that birds flying across it die in flight. The shores, then, seem to be overgrown with trees giving fruit similar to apples, but if cut in half, they merely contain reeking ash instead of flesh packed with juices.<sup>39</sup>

And it was, in Harant’s opinion, the very surroundings of the thus uninvitingly portrayed Dead Sea which were inhabited by Tyrus, the fatally poisonous snake whose bodily parts can be so beneficial in making the noted *tyriaca* electuary, adored by medicinal treatises for centuries as the utmost effective remedy against the plague.<sup>40</sup> Harant indeed paid much attention to the issues linked with the plague in his travelogue. The introduction to his story reads how perfectly his arrival in the Bohemian city of Pilsen coincided with the sojourn of Rudolf II and his court, as the residential city of Prague was right at that time affected by the epidemic.<sup>41</sup> He also talks about the non-plague certificate which he and his companion, Hermann Czernin, had been issued in Trento for the purposes of their following travels. With unconcealed pride, he recounts how craftily he outwitted a Venetian officer who, at a checkpoint to the city, noticed that the name of Christopher Harant was simply missing in the document.<sup>42</sup> He also marvels at the Venetian regulations aimed at collective protection against plague, synoptically given as quarantine (*quarantana*), and enumerates the responsibilities of the officers overseeing the local inhabitants’ health (*Signori della sanita*).<sup>43</sup> And although even the Czech milieu at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did produce documents on enforcing some principles of this kind, the situation in Bohemian cities was utterly incomparable to that dominating in Venice. Let alone

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<sup>38</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 232.

<sup>39</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 230.

<sup>40</sup> Christiane Nockels Fabbri, “Treating Medieval Plague: The Wonderful Virtues of Theriac,” *Early Science and Medicine* 12 (2007): 247–83.

<sup>41</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 2.

<sup>42</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 13.

<sup>43</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 37.

that there was no permanent office for solving the issues of public health even in the capital of the Bohemian kingdom during Harant's journey when the tradition of such an institution in Venice dated already back more than hundred years.<sup>44</sup>

While lauding Venice for its healthy air – be it, among other things, proved by the fact that he saw a great many local people of advanced age<sup>45</sup> – Harant rated the environment of cities throughout Egypt quite otherwise. Cairo in his view was suffocating with dust and its streets were veiled in grey fog, with dust being omnipresent to the point of triggering eye malfunctions of the population whose majority suffered from a wide range of eye irritations at least.<sup>46</sup> He observes that the plague seems to reappear there at least every two or three years, sometimes even annually, which results in considerable losses in lives, ranging up to one hundred thousand victims. He ascribes these high numbers to the religious imagery of the locals believing in the unchangeable predestination of human fate. The Cairo inhabitants, similar to other Muslims, therefore not only do not flee from the contagion but, on the contrary, directly seek it when boldly visiting the ill.

Harant literally writes that they continue arbitrarily exposing themselves to danger, and thus croak like sheep.<sup>47</sup> The Czech nobleman in his commentary refers to the characteristic attitude of the Middle-East population toward contagious diseases as such which, in principle, hinders installing any quarantine measurements.<sup>48</sup> It is nevertheless paradoxical that as early as in 1569, the Jesuits described comparable fatalism among the Utraquist inhabitants of Prague who, too, did not detest the contaminated patients and instead almost ostentatiously sought their presence.<sup>49</sup> The Czech-language treatise from 1582 titled *Rozmlauvání o moru* (*Dialogue about the Plague*) by an otherwise unknown priest Johann of Bakov, testifies that fatalism in relation to the plague surely was not foreign to some inhabitants of the Czech lands at that time – and especially those who were fearless of being infected, attended to their neighbors on a large scale.<sup>50</sup>

In describing Alexandria, Christopher Harant also concludes that its air is apparently detrimental to health, and ponders that the reason for the unfortunate

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44 Carlo M. Cipolla, *Public Health and the Medical Profession in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 11–12.

45 Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 18.

46 Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 203–04.

47 Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 218.

48 Sheldon J. Watts, *Epidemics and History: Disease, Power and Imperialism* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 25–39.

49 A. Lynn Martin, *Plague? Jesuit Accounts of Epidemic Disease in the 16th Century*. Sixteenth Century Studies, 28 (Kirkville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1996), 41–43.

50 Jan z Bakova, *Sedlák povycvičený rozmlauvání s doktorem lékařským o moru maje, že od morních bolestí žádného nakažení, dovozuje* (Prague: Jiří Černý z Černého Mostu, 1582), 52r.

condition is either the vapors blown in from around the nearby lake Mariout, or those produced by the ancient cellars under the local houses. Harant is more inclined to the latter option, informing readers that the dense network of the given underground system is constantly being flooded with muddy waters running from the arms of Nile. The dead water then rots and becomes the source of a reeking miasma which frequently makes the locals suffer from high fevers.<sup>51</sup> The author perfectly knew from practice that even fresh water can quickly deteriorate. After all, his travelogue notes that drinking water brought by pilgrims to transatlantic ships far too often turned into a non-comestible liquid swarming with worms and other fulsome filth.

The water rated as exceptional by Harant during his travels was that running in the Jordan River. He values it as extremely durable, finding it fresh for much longer than others and staying so for over a century. The river mud, however unsightly, is moreover a vital blessing for the surrounding landscape, since it irrigates many forests and groves densely inhabited with animals. And there are also its healing effects, well-documented by the story about Naaman who, advised by the Prophet Elisha, miraculously recovered from leprosy after diving into it seven times. Following the example of other pilgrims, Harant purchased a tin-plated bottle in Jerusalem to fill it with the precious liquid. Although it was naturally turbid in the beginning, he writes, it slowly transformed into absolute clearness. The aristocrat allegedly transported it as far back as to the Czech lands in spite of all the hardships, and had his daughter, Rozina Alžběta, baptized with it in 1604. He also reports that he kept some of it even until the completion of the travelogue, and that it still was delicious.<sup>52</sup>

The printed *Bohemian Cosmography* does not provide a single reference as to the unique durability of water from the River Jordan. Describing the stream and its vicinity, Christopher Harant most probably solely took the information on the high numbers of lions living around it from the encyclopedia.<sup>53</sup> However, the publication must have undoubtedly steered him toward the description of the river Nile. The *Cosmography* depicts Egypt as an incredibly fertile landscape abounding in all the imaginable no matter that it experiences hardly any rainfall. The only source of its fruitfulness is the famed river, which regularly spills over, invigorating the closest landscape via its muddy waters. In the times of floods, Egyptians reportedly spend their time idling on the small, hardly surfacing islands left in the midst of the flooded Nile riverbed, simply waiting for the element do the work for them alone. Egypt also seems to be so marvelously fertile that the local

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<sup>51</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 257.

<sup>52</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 227.

<sup>53</sup> *Kosmografie česká* (see note 16), 45v.

women deliver two or more offspring in a multiple birth more often than everywhere in the world.<sup>54</sup>

At the same time, Harant highlights the exceptional productiveness of the Nile stating that its water boosts blood formation, and claims that it had acquired this unique quality in the times of Moses, when it was turned to blood as one of the warning signs addressed to the Pharaoh. To him, the exceptionality of the Nile water was confirmed by both Galen and Avicenna, as well as other Arabian physicians, and its effects can be observed on the physical constitution of the people living around the river – for they are stouter than all other Arabs.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, in his travelogue, Christopher Harant closely explores the precious flora cultivated in the Holy Land and Egypt. Describing the city of Ramah, he casts his mind back to its gardens overgrown with the then rare aloe which, as he remarks, is a source of a precious liquid widely employed in medicine and serving to conserve the bodies of the deceased.<sup>56</sup> Medieval physicians generally valued the plant as a substance useful in treating many serious illnesses, and it was simultaneously an ingredient of the so-called Jerusalemite pills, a remedy allegedly efficient in fighting cancer.<sup>57</sup> The Czech translation of Mattioli's herbal states that its best variant grows in Arabia and, generally, in Asia and can also be found in the warm climatic zones of Europe. It is a desired main ingredient of the famed *pillulae pestilenciales* – noted pills preventing plague infection.<sup>58</sup> The surroundings of the city of Jericho are, then, legendary for the traditional plant renowned for its magical qualities, which is known as the Rose of Jericho. The *Bohemian Cosmography* advises pregnant women to soak the rose in a glass of wine if she wishes to know her child's sex – for the flower opens if it is a boy and stays closed if the contrary is true.<sup>59</sup> Harant writes that the rose is being imported to Europe on a regular basis and is widely available in good pharmacies, adding that it eases childbirth and, mainly, efficiently boosts conception. He also attaches a personal observation to this: the immensely vast crowds of kids he reportedly spotted around Jericho definitely convinced him of the declared power of the plant.<sup>60</sup>

A precious but strictly guarded garden near Cairo, planted with an aloe tree known for its extensive medical use, did not escape the author's attention,

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<sup>54</sup> *Kosmografie česká* (see note 16), 125v.

<sup>55</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 26.

<sup>56</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 121.

<sup>57</sup> Efraim Lev and Zohar Amar, *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean According to the Cairo Genizeah* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 95–96.

<sup>58</sup> Pietro Andrea Mattioli, *Herbář aneb bylinář* (Prague: Daniel Adam z Veleslavína, 1596), 230 D.

<sup>59</sup> *Česká kosmografie* (see note 16), 48r.

<sup>60</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 221.



either – although he was denied entry to it and thus had to peek into the lush growth only via vistas in the garden gate. Harant does not forget to note that aloe balsam does not only grow in the given garden or, respectively, around Cairo, but also in other places throughout Arabia, mainly around Mecca. It is a valued export article and is even available in Prague pharmacies which sell it as a great curio. And while people in Europe take the balsam oil as an exclusive antidote or as an ointment to treat serious injuries, wealthy Egyptian women in Harant's words use it as a cosmetic formula for maintaining soft skin.<sup>61</sup>

The *Bohemian Cosmography* also portrays a strictly guarded balsam garden at an approximately three-hour drive from Cairo, stating that no Christian pilgrim had reportedly been allowed in for already two centuries. The encyclopedia praises the balsam oil for its capability to provide resistance to plague epidemics and to conserve fresh meat for an extraordinarily long time.<sup>62</sup> The quoted information, nevertheless, does not only have a culinary dimension as it may seem from the literal transcription; the balsam was mainly known as a substance for permanently conserving dead bodies. Christopher Harant, too, naturally wrote about this quality.<sup>63</sup>

An interesting cultural and historical context also surfaces from Harant's description of opium which can be obtained from the fruit of the field poppy. Harant writes that although the field poppy does grow in the Czech lands as well, the juice of the local fruit is far from being as potent as the opium acquired from the plants found in the lands of Orient. He adds that while in Central Europe, opium is a rarity indicated as a strong painkiller, people in the Muslim world consume it on an almost daily and commonplace basis to arrive at a state similar to very strong drunkenness which includes hallucinations. Harant observes discontentedly that this ominous habit has recently become widespread in Central-European countries bordering the Turkish domain.<sup>64</sup> The balsam and the Oriental opium thus exemplify two substances known to and valued by the contemporary Central Europeans as a rarity with exclusive medical use. However, in the countries of their origin, they also served non-medical purposes, which Harant did not omit to mention in both cases.

Christopher Harant's description of Cyprus cursorily mentions an unnamed, ruined monastery near the city of Paphos where the locals show visitors around seven caves in the cellars, which allegedly served as a shelter to the legendary seven sleeping youths.<sup>65</sup> The hagiography tradition has it that they hid in the

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<sup>61</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 70.

<sup>62</sup> *Česká kosmografie* (see note 16), 131v.

<sup>63</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 231–32.

<sup>64</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 319.

<sup>65</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 99.

caves in 251 C.E. during the pursuit of the Christians under the reign of the Roman Emperor Decius. God sent them down to sleep from which they awoke almost two hundred years later, during the rule of Emperor Theodosius II, when the danger of persecution was no longer imminent. It is said that as soon as he learned about their miraculous awakening, the latter emperor unexpectedly recovered from his illness. However, the perhaps most famed medieval collection of hagiographic stories, the so-called *Legenda aurea* (*Golden Legend*), states that the caves were, instead, in the Lesser-Asian (Anatolian) city of Ephesus.<sup>66</sup>

It is highly probable that the Bohemian traveler actually never visited the monastery cellars in Cyprus since he refers to them as a merely marginal interest, and readers thus receive no information about the cult linked with the place either or the relics that could be shown or even offered for purchase to visitors. The story of the seven sleepers alone was well-known in Europe and its abbreviated version served as a charm inscribed on various medical talismans designed to cure fevers and insomnia.<sup>67</sup> Harant probably knew about this, because the seven sleeper's narrative was frequent throughout the Czech lands as well. By coincidence, an identical charm is part of the earliest physically surviving Bohemian talisman, dating to the fourteenth century and issued to a nun named Dobroslava from the St. George Convent in Prague Castle. The Latin text, commemorating the fortunate fate of the seven sleepers, was to protect her against feverish condition.<sup>68</sup>

Harant could mainly admire remarkable places, objects and substances while journeying around the Holy Land. Writing about the ruins of the once-famous city of Lydda, he notes that this is the place where, according to the Acts of the Apostles, Peter with his words healed the paralyzed Aeneas who had previously been confined to bed for eight years. The author interestingly updates the narrative by claiming that the patient was immobile due to persistent gout.<sup>69</sup> It was a disease of the wealthy elites and it would painfully torment a great many noblemen in their advanced age. The Bohemian traveler moreover mentions a well near the city of Emmaus in which Jesus washed his feet and which reportedly has had

<sup>66</sup> Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda aurea*, ed. Alessandro Vitale Brovanone and Lucetta Vitale Brovanone (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1995), 670.

<sup>67</sup> Lea T. Olsan, "Latin Charms of Medieval England: Verbal Healing in Chrisitan Oral Tradition," *Oral Tradition* 7.1 (1992): 116–42; here 130.

<sup>68</sup> "+ In nomine + patris + et filii + et spiritus + sancti + in monte + Celion + requiescunt septem dormientes + Maximianus + Martinianus + Malcus + Constantinus + et Dionisius + Seraphion + et Johannes. Domine Jesu Christe liberare digneris hanc famulam Dobroslauam a febris quin-tanis." Quoted from J. V. Nováček, "Amulet ze XIV. století, nalezený v chrámu sv. Jiří na Hradě," *Český Lid* 10 (1901): 353.

<sup>69</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 121.

healing power since, as has been documented by numerous examples of cured individuals and animals.<sup>70</sup>

Christopher Harant did not doubt the miraculous power of sacred relics and believed it was the very miracles that proved their authenticity. Introducing readers to the story about discovering the Holy Cross in a place near the Holy Sepulchre, he highlights that the debris gave out no less than three crosses. Helena, the Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, who initiated the seeking of the Holy Cross, followed the advice of the Jerusalem bishop and ordered all three crosses to be laid successively on a fatally sick woman. The physical contact with the third cross healed the woman entirely, a miracle which confirmed the authenticity of the find.<sup>71</sup> Harant also believed that contact with the holy places can give magical power even to objects of everyday use. In his travelogue, he boasts he had bought various rings, rosaries and crosses in Jerusalem from the local Christians, some being set with minute stones collected at places linked with the life and martyrdom of Christ. He then again took them on a tour around all the significant holy places in Jerusalem, touching both his body and the places with them.<sup>72</sup>

At the Mount of Olives, Harant visited a chapel commemorating Christ's prayer held there on the eve of His crucifixion. He inspected the place bearing Christ's feet imprinted into the rock with undisguised admiration, and described the traces in utmost detail. Similar to other pilgrims, he kissed the rock, at the same time noticing that the stone smelled nice, as if being coated with some aromatic juice. Asking the local guide as to the purposes of this oddity, he was assured that the fragrance is of miraculous origin and had been intrinsic to the place for centuries.<sup>73</sup> Near Bethlehem, the author visited a cave where the Holy Family found shelter prior to fleeing to Jerusalem. He was especially captivated by a special place in the local rock, the color of which was much lighter than the rest and had a much softer consistence reminiscent of clay. Here, Harant reminds readers of the famed Armenian earth (*Bolus armenus*) which was well-known in the Czech lands, and of its use for therapeutic purposes being frequent throughout the Middle East.<sup>74</sup> In Bohemia, its exotic origin earned it the reputation of a rare ingredient of medications safeguarding against plague infection or, respectively, poisoning.<sup>75</sup>

As to the unusual clay found in the above-mentioned cave, Christopher Harant also writes that the place must have undoubtedly soaked up several drops of the

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<sup>70</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 130.

<sup>71</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 150.

<sup>72</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 173–74.

<sup>73</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 185.

<sup>74</sup> Lev and Amar, *Practical Materia Medica* (see note 57), 95–150.

<sup>75</sup> Říhová, Stehlíková and Tomíček, *Lékaři na dvoře* (see note 32), 82.

Virgin's breast milk which transformed the consistence of the rock everywhere they landed, moreover stating that the miraculous origin of the given viscous substance is proved by its pleasant aroma. It is reportedly used as an additive to food or drinks for mothers who have lost their breast milk, and is even given to cattle in order to increase milk yield, with both Christians and Muslims believing in its efficacy. Harant claims he brought a piece of the material back to his homeland.<sup>76</sup> Muslims, he reports, also revere water from the Siloe well near Jerusalem, which is traditionally said to have helped Jesus heal an innately blind man.

In Harant's words, the clean water from the well is greatly beneficial and can even eliminate the strong odor produced by goats, therefore being mainly used by the local shepherds. Moreover, the Bohemian nobleman mentions the immense respect of the Muslim population toward the stone on which John the Baptist was beheaded, noting that it is still deposited in a former church consecrated to the same saint. Contrary to the Siloe well water and the Marian clay from the cave near Bethlehem, Muslims are nevertheless allegedly afraid of the stone and believe that sitting on it can result in severe intestinal pain.<sup>77</sup>

Crossing the desert on his way to Sinai, Harant had the opportunity to taste the water of the famed Moses's wells. It is worth noting that it did not impress him much, no matter how the local guide were enthused about its extraordinary effects. The author, on the contrary, describes them as filthy and reeking puddles, and he does not judge their water any better. He would drink it with sheer distaste and states in the travelogue that it made him understand why the Mongolians and other similar nations can enjoy drinking the warm blood of their horses, adding that it must be incomparably more pleasant than to consume such water.<sup>78</sup> He brought home a memory of the Old-Testament leader of the Israelite nation anyway: following Moses's example, he made himself a pilgrimage stick of the same bush wood that the prophet had used for his. He also describes the wood as hard, heavy and knotty and remarks that a stick made of this wood can ease childbirth if a woman in the childbed holds it in her hand at the critical moment.<sup>79</sup>

However, the main aim of the expedition to Sinai was to visit the local St. Catherine's Monastery. The saint enjoyed extraordinary respect in the Middle Ages, probably also in connection with the news about her remains having been discovered. That is, according to the hagiographic tradition, an angel hid the body of the departed woman somewhere on the mountain and the last place of her rest was to remain concealed forever. The monastery was established by

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<sup>76</sup> Harant, *Putování I* (see note 6), 261.

<sup>77</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 254.

<sup>78</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 78.

<sup>79</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 99.

Emperor Justinian in the sixth century; nevertheless, St. Catherine's body was not part of its inventory for at least two centuries more. Although it was reportedly found in the eighth century by monks at the nearby mountain Jebel Katrin, scholars view this tradition as of a later date.<sup>80</sup> At the time of Harant's journey, visiting the tomb of St. Catherine had for centuries already been a prominent item on the itinerary of pious pilgrims. The Bohemian traveler succeeded in seeing the saint's remains as well, and minutely describes her blackened head where the nose and mouth turned almost invisible. The rest of the body, he writes, was mostly decayed, being merely bones, but observes that the left hand was remarkably well-preserved, having even retained the soft tissues and skin. He also adds that he read information that Catherine's bones at times expose drops of oil helpful against many diseases. He only wonders why he had not been told about the remedy by the local monks.<sup>81</sup>

As it follows from the description, the body of St. Catherine survived only in part, but the condition of her face and her left hand allows for a possible mummification, whether natural or intentional. Harant, however, does not mention this hypothesis in the given context, although he was well familiar with Egyptian mummies. His travelogue describes the Egyptian funeral rite and the method of body conservation, including the ingredients contained in the embalming solutions.<sup>82</sup> He also minutely elaborates on the diseases and other health risks where parts of Egyptian mummified bodies can be largely beneficial; after all, these represented a precious rarity in contemporary Europe and were ascribed extraordinary effects.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, the concept "mummy" could include a wide range of substances. Johann Černý's herbal states that besides parts of embalmed bodies, it was also used to describe a mysterious substance originating from mountain slopes, a juice from the roots of an unknown plant as well as a product of nature resembling tar, the qualities of which are influenced by celestial objects.<sup>84</sup>

In any case, Harant equates the term to mummified bodies. He is also open enough to complain that the Turks had imposed an embargo on importing mummies into Europe, albeit noting that the French King Francis I actually owned a small piece of a mummy and would keep it with him on his travels.

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<sup>80</sup> Christine Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe*. Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2017), 39–40.

<sup>81</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 104.

<sup>82</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 191.

<sup>83</sup> Karl H. Dannenfeldt, "Egyptian Mumia: The Sixteenth Century Experience and Debate," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16.2 (1986): 163–80. See also: Warren R. Dawson, "Mummy as a Drug," *Proceeding of the Royal Society of Medicine* 21.1 (1927): 34–39.

<sup>84</sup> Černý, *Knihyha* (see note 26), 76v.

Emperor Rudolf II, in Harant's words, even had a whole mummified body, "i.e. a whole person". The author had a chance to see it in person and could tell its Egyptian origin after its red-discolored nails.<sup>85</sup> It was most probably deposited in the famed Prague *Kunstammer*, as is also suggested by its 1619 inventory.<sup>86</sup>

The note about the mummy from the Prague collections of Rudolf II finally brings us to a close by assessing the character and significance of Christopher Harant's travelogue. It is without doubt a scholarly treatise, which not only offers the experiences from the author's travels but is also a comprehensive summary of information on the Middle East. Harant in his own words would make detailed notes during the journey, but began writing the book only upon his return to Prague. There, he could make full use of the opportunity of working with the specimen held in the Prague Castle collection of rarities, and perhaps also with the volumes in the local library. The text clearly betrays that he acquired much information after the journey from books and did not have them available directly with him. In addition, it is highly probable that he did not visit in person some of the places he mentions or, respectively, that he almost slavishly copied passages from the existing textual tradition.

The work is dedicated to the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia, Rudolf II, and it indeed celebrates the emperor's Mannerist personality. It is therefore not only a testimony about travels, but also about the intellectual atmosphere which reigned in the Prague court in the early seventeenth century. It is even more valuable with regard to the later fate of the Rudolfine collections which today are merely known from conscientious reconstructions.

Christopher Harant was without doubt an extremely perceptive and open-minded Renaissance intellectual. It is true that he was incapable of resisting and staying immune to the stereotypes of his time, and his description of many phenomena observed in the Middle East would definitely not comply with the standards of political correctness today. On the other hand, his travelogue shows that he was far from being one of the blind obscurantists. With appalled displeasure, he repeatedly informs readers that he has had to face various more or less severe injustices just for being a foreigner and a dissenter.

And yet, his description of the places he visited testifies to his preoccupation with unknown phenomena and his willingness to appreciate facts that captivated him in a positive sense. His travelogue is simultaneously aimed at his self-representation – he, not accidentally, reminds readers that he still owns objects of enormous value, whether they are products of nature or touched artifacts

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<sup>85</sup> Harant, *Putování II* (see note 6), 196.

<sup>86</sup> Jan Morávek, "Nově objevený inventář rudolfinských sbírek na pražském hradě," *Památky archeologické – skupina historická*. New series 2, 38 (1932): 69–83; here 72.

(i.e., objects which had been in contact with a holy person or a holy place). And although here in my essay I do not discuss the issues linked with Harant's religious belief, it can still be claimed that visiting holy places was an extraordinary and deeply-felt experience for him.

## Conclusion

Apart from the passages devoted to Jerusalem and its environs, however, the travelogue gives preference to natural rarities, lifestyles and habits of the inhabitants of the visited places and the subjects linked with contemporary medicine and pharmacology over belief. Christopher Harant lived in an era which repeatedly faced the threat of plague epidemics and moreover, as a person on travels, he was in general much more sensitive to health risks. It is nevertheless surprising how intense the attention was which he paid to various phenomena linked with infection and poisoning or, respectively, with protection against them. The travelogue thus also contains a rather pragmatic line revolving around prophylaxis.

Harant's view of the cause and nature of plague follows a traditional note, for he mainly perceived it as a contagion caused by lethal poison, and the indicator of its existence to him was malodor as the characteristic sign of a rotten miasma. His description of the Middle-Eastern marvels generally bespeaks of an informed author and proves that the early seventeenth-century Egypt and the Holy Land were places of well-known exoticism – and certainly so as compared to the New World as a source of constantly arriving reports of things yet unheard of.

Charlotte A. Stanford

## Traveling Carpenters: The Russell Family of Westminster in the Early Sixteenth Century

In the sixteenth century, the carpenters' guild of London, like every craft, aimed to control their trade within and without the city walls. Unlike masons, who traditionally have been said to encourage journeymen's travel, the London carpenters were most concerned with the quality of local apprentice training and those who paid appropriate fees to gain the freedom of the city.<sup>1</sup> The demand for building services, however, was too heavy within the growing city to remain solely within the hands of approved guild masters, their apprentices and "covenant men."<sup>2</sup> Successful carpenters might not need to travel far afield, if travel at all, to gain employment, because local need for building outstripped the resources the guild company could actually provide. The guilds, however, resisted the influx of "forrens" and "aliens" to meet local construction demands, especially when it came to the increased construction demands of the Crown in the reign

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1 Such freedom gave the holder rights to trade and practice their craft within the city limits. It should be noted that the derivation of the term journeyman comes from the French journée (day), and refers to the day wage paid most craftsmen, rather than any notion of "journeying" per se.

2 The ordinances of the guild specifically prohibited that "no manner p(er)sone occupying the same Crafte within the said Citee or lib(er)tie thereof fromhensforth sette any Foreyn awerke within the same Citee or libertie but suche as have been Covenaut s(er)vauntes or allowes within the said Crafte without license of the Maister and Wardeyns of the said crafte," Article 26 of the 1487 guild ordinances as printed in Bower Marsh, *Records of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters*. Vol. 2: *Warden's Account Book, 1438–1516* (Oxford University Press, 1914), appendix 1, 247–53. It was clear that the demand for construction encouraged the immigration of non-guild carpenters, with or without the licensing procedure. With patronage and payment of the proper fees, some of these men joined the London guild, but it is likely that others operated without official sanction. On this point, see Doreen Sylvia Leach, "Carpenters in Medieval London, c. 1240–c.1540," doctoral thesis submitted to the department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London, March 2017, 75, 77.

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of Henry VIII.<sup>3</sup> While travel may not have been strictly necessary for a London guild carpenter, talented and able craftsmen who were willing to travel from site to site could be assured of high wages and more stable employ. Indeed, the Crown aggressively recruited in this fashion, “impressing” labor from skilled workmen who sometimes were forced to abandon prior contracts and journey, sometimes significant distances, to work on projects considered essential.<sup>4</sup> In this market, not only was mobility an asset, it could become a positive reputation-builder, as it was for one family in particular: the Russells of Westminster (Table 1).

Henry VIII’s building works have enjoyed something of a boom in recent years, thanks to the high profile of the Tudors in the realm of popular culture, and in the scholarly work of Simon Thurley, former chief executive of the English Heritage Trust.<sup>5</sup> Scholars of the late medieval and early modern periods have also renewed interest in the building trades in recent years, especially in trades

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3 “Forrens” were individuals who did not reside in London while “aliens” were persons born outside of England; see George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London*, with a new introduction by William F. Kahl (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1963), 245. An excellent discussion of Henry VIII and his obsession with building renovations is provided in Simon Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England: Architecture and Court Life 1460–1547* (New Haven, CT, and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 1993). For detailed treatment of Henry’s more than seventy residences, see Howard M. Colvin, ed., *The History of the King’s Works*, vol. 3 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1975).

4 In 1532 the carpenter John Hawkyins was sued for failing to erect two houses in Shoreditch, though he and his servants had been taken to work for the king at York Place and had been detained there; see L. F. Salzman, *Building in England Down to 1540* (1952; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 38, 98. Workmen were theoretically compensated by being paid traveling costs (or “post money”) at the rate of 6d per 20 miles; see Simon Thurley, *Houses of Power: The Places That Shaped the Tudor World* (London: Bantam Press, 2017), 244.

5 Notable among the popular literature in the Tudor-era historical fiction genre are Hilary Mantel’s recent award-winning novels on the career of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII’s master secretary: *Wolf Hall: A Novel*. First U.S. edition (New York: Henry Holt, 2009) and *Bring Up the Bodies: A Novel*. First U.S. edition, Wolf Hall Trilogy vol. 2 (New York, Henry Holt, 2012), with an upcoming concluding volume, *The Mirror and the Light*, still in progress. The BBC miniseries *Wolf Hall*, based on these books, brought Henrician architecture vividly to the public view through filming in restored period houses, including the Long Gallery at Penshurst Place, one of Henry VIII’s residences (Penshurst Place guides, personal communication, July 2017). Thurley’s most recent work, *Houses of Power* (see note 4) as well as his magisterial work, *Royal Palaces* (see note 3) provides thorough detail on the royal residences of this era, as does his published case studies for three Tudor palaces, including *Whitehall Palace: An Architectural History of the Royal Apartments 1240–1698* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), *Hampton Court Palace: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, CT, and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 2003), and, with Rob Poulton, Alan Cook, and Derek Atkinson, *Excavations at Oatlands Palace 1968–73 and 1983–4*. Spoilheap Monograph, 3 (Woking: Surrey County Archaeological Unit, 2010).

**Table 1:** Identified Members of the Russell Family of Westminster in the Sixteenth Century.

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Older generation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>John Russell Sr.</i>, carpenter (fl. 1474–1518)</li><li>– <i>Richard Russell</i>, master carpenter of Westminster Abbey and York Place/ Hampton Court (fl. 1490–1517), married Custance, children <i>William</i>, <i>Joan I</i>, Ellen and <i>John</i></li><li>– <i>Thomas Russell</i>, carpenter and joiner (fl. 1500–1526)</li><li>– <i>Robert Russell Sr.</i>, carpenter (fl. 1498–1515)</li></ul>

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Younger generation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>Robert Russell Jr.</i>, carpenter (fl. 1515–1526)</li><li>– Children of Richard Russell:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>William Russell</i>, wax chandler (d. 1543), married Agnes, children Ellen and <i>Joan II</i></li><li>– <i>Joan Russell I</i> (fl. 1556), married Guy Gaskin, carpenter (fl. 1524–1557)</li><li>– <i>John Russell Jr.</i> (d. 1566), King’s Master Carpenter (1532) and Master of the London Carpenters’ Company (1550), married Christian Cooke, daughter of King’s Master Carpenter Humphrey Cooke (d. 1531), children <i>Francis</i>, Henry, Elizabeth, and Dorcas</li></ul></li></ul>

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Third generation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Children of <i>William Russell</i>:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>Joan Russell II</i> (d. 1556), married 1. John Parker (d. 1545), son Richard; and 2. Nicholas Ellys (d. 1556), King’s Master Mason (1547), children Ann, William, Grace, Margaret</li></ul></li><li>– Children of <i>John Russell Jr.</i>:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>Francis Russell</i>, gentleman (d. 1581), married Katherine Apsley, children John, Jane, Mary, Katherine and Frances</li></ul></li><li>– Additional Russells in the carpentry trade (exact family relationship unknown):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>Ric Russell</i> (Richard Jr.), carpenter at Greenwich (fl. 1533)</li><li>– <i>John Russell III</i>, joiner at Dartford (fl. 1542)</li></ul></li></ul>

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**Sources:** Harvey, *Mediaeval English Architects* (see note 8); Ransome, “Artisan Dynasties” (see note 8); Leach “Carpenters” (see note 2); Public Record Office (hereafter PRO) wills, and MSS Rawlinson D 776 and 781–83, Oxford Bodleian libraries.

**Note:** Italics in names indicate a separate entry in this table.

related to wood-working.<sup>6</sup> And scholars have also undertaken to search out the lives of “small” craftspeople, insofar as they can be reconstructed from the

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**6** Recent studies of English woodworking guilds include Doreen Leach, “The Turners of Medieval London,” paper sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Turners of London (York: Uniprint at the University of York, 2012) and “Carpenters” (see note 2), as well as Jessica Lutkin, “The London Craft of Joiners, 1200–1550,” *Medieval Prosopography* 25 (2005): 129–164. For a recent treatment of similar work in the Low Countries, see Tineke Van Gassen, “Social Mobility in the Craft Guilds of Masons and Carpenters in Late Medieval Ghent,” *Craftsmen and Guilds in the Medieval and Early Modern Period*, ed. Eva Jullien and Michel Pauly. Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Beihefte, 235 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2016), 57–76.



**Fig. 1:** Southern England sites with Russell family involvement (insert shows Westminster near London. (Map by Luke Newey, with information provided by Charlotte A. Stanford).

record.<sup>7</sup> The records are relatively robust for the Russells of Westminster, a three-generation carpenter dynasty whose members were prominent in the London Carpenters' Guild and who served the Crown.<sup>8</sup> This essay seeks to examine further the contributions of these individuals, their family links, and their movements through southern England.

The Russell family spanned at least three generations of eminent carpenters whose members were employed in major workshops, both ecclesiastical and secular. Their work sites ranged from the conveniently local (Westminster, the Strand) to sites much farther afield (Kent, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Surrey; see Fig. 1). As many of the sites where the Russells found employment were prestige

<sup>7</sup> See Caroline Barron, "Searching for the 'Small People' of Medieval London," *The Local Historian* 38.2 (2008): 83–94.

<sup>8</sup> The Russell family lineage is laid out in David R. Ransome, "Artisan Dynasties in London and Westminster in the Sixteenth Century," *Guildhall Miscellany* II.6 (Oct 1964): 236–47. A detailed discussion of the careers for three of the Russell family members (John Sr., John Jr., and Richard [Sr.]) is given in John Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects: A Biographical Dictionary Down to 1550*, rev. ed. (London: Alan Sutton, 1984), 260–62. Neither source, however, mentions John Jr.'s apprenticeship commencement at the Savoy hospital; a fact important to this paper's argument, developed later, that John was likely recruited to assist with scaffolding works at that site.



**Fig. 2:** Guedelon castle, France, reconstruction project with scaffolding and put-log holes. On some medieval sites, the scaffold planks would be replaced by structures of woven poles, known as “hurdles.” (Photo by Jennifer Jones, with permission).

buildings, constructed primarily of brick and stone, their timberwork contributions have not always received full recognition in the literature. But the importance of carpentry cannot be understated, even for buildings of stone. While masons may have been listed first in contemporary hierarchical building accounts, a site’s master carpenter was granted equal pay with his fellow master mason. Although each of these two craft masters usually headed his own discrete workshop on the same building site, the coordination of these workshops was as essential as the coordination of their works. Masons, bricklayers, and all other site workers literally put their lives into the hands of their carpenter colleagues whenever they climbed the scaffolding.

Scaffolding was erected to support the construction of walls and vaults.<sup>9</sup> Masonry works required a great deal of scaffolding, and sturdy stuff too. The

<sup>9</sup> For a thorough review of scaffolding techniques, see John Fitchen, *The Construction of Gothic Cathedrals: A Study of Medieval Vault Erection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

valuable timber was taken down at the end of the project, but remaining put-holes can reveal just how substantial these timbers could be (Fig. 2). Between the timber frames of the scaffolding, platforms were constructed of planks or woven of lightweight “hurdles,” often made of springy alder poles (elm or oak was usually the preferred wood for other construction). The need to maximize efficiency and cost explains why most churches were built bay by bay because the timber and other scaffold framing materials could be reused repeatedly. It was not a quick process. Once the scaffolding had been set up, there was a considerable time lag before the masons or bricklayers completed the wall or vaulting in the appropriate section. Then the mortar had to cure. Moreover, the work tended to be seasonal, as construction was generally halted in winter and any unfinished walls were covered with dung and straw to prevent freezing and cracking. Then, there were often further delays as budgets ran short, or workmen were impressed to other projects, or died of the plague. In all, there could be quite a time lag until the scaffolding needed to be taken down and re-erected. The records of Westminster Abbey illustrate for the year 1500–1501 that the lodge masons worked 16 weeks in comparison to the carpenters, who worked 30 days (and the laborers, unnamed, who worked only 22 days) (Table 2). Yet there were six carpenters

**Table 2:** Building Workers on the Payroll for Westminster Abbey’s New Work, 1500–1501.

Craftsman	Occupation	Days paid
Robert Stowell	master mason	46 weeks
John Manfeld	mason	52 weeks
Thomas Redman	apprentice mason	52 weeks
Richard Squyer	mason in the lodge	16 weeks
Thomas Newell	mason in the lodge	16 weeks
4 unnamed	laborers	22 days
William Playston	laborer in the stone house	“various times in the year”
John Gybson	laborer in the stone house	“various times in the year”
Thomas Wrenche	custodian of the Eastgrove wood	annual stipend
Robert Russell	carpenter	30 days
Thomas Russell	carpenter	30 days
Michael Palle	carpenter	30 days
William Gaywode	carpenter	30 days
Richard Stokdale	carpenter	30 days
Thomas Atewyshe	carpenter	30 days
John Symon	smith	taskwork
Jacob Long	plumber	taskwork

**Source:** Westminster Abbey Muniments (hereafter WAM), MS 23579.

**Note:** Years extend from Michelmas to Michelmas (i.e., 29 September 1499 to 29 September 1500).

named on the project, compared to five masons. This indicates a short, intense time frame for the carpenters, for some effort like scaffold erection, that did not require long-term employment at the work site. Such short-term work projects would have encouraged specialization, both on the part of the workshop (it would be more efficient to hire a team of experts) and on the part of the carpenters themselves, who could seek to line up jobs one after the other for their specific skill set.

The Russell family made something of a specialty career out of scaffolding. Indeed, this paper will argue that it was their expertise in this area that prompted much of the older generation's travel from site to site, and may well have helped spark the career development of their younger and most illustrious family member, John Russell, Jr. The Russells were, of course, competent in multiple areas of carpentry, and John Jr., who capped his career by being appointed the King's Master Carpenter, was also an expert workshop organizer and roof builder, like his father Richard. However, even John Jr.'s place among the most eminent craftsmen of his day has not prevented him from being described by his biographer John Harvey as a "ghost," hidden during his lifetime by more dramatic contemporaries.<sup>10</sup> Given the ephemeral nature of scaffolding, much of the Russell family's work would have been more "ghostly" than other carpentry work.

For Richard and other men in the Russell family, therefore, traveling would have been a necessity to keep in steady employment. Even though the wages Richard was paid were on the higher side for a building artisan (8d per day when the norm was 6d), the cost of living necessitated regular employment.<sup>11</sup> The full liturgical calendar of holidays cut into the wages that even a steadily-employed man could earn: at the Savoy hospital in 1514, for instance, the laborer class earned wages on only 270 days of the year.<sup>12</sup> Such families would have had to rely on all members of the household to pull their weight and supplement the family income.

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**10** Notably John Jr. was overshadowed by his contemporary James Nedeham, surveyor of the king's works, who had possibly also helped train him; see Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 262, and Ransome, "Artisan Dynasties" (see note 8), 242.

**11** Christopher Dyer estimates that food costs for basic fare of bread, ale, and occasional meat would cost late medieval workers in Worcester 1d per day (more if the cost of grain rose), though this did not include housing and clothing costs. Presumably sixteenth-century London and Westminster residents would have faced higher expenses. See Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England c. 1200–1520*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 253.

**12** In 1514, the Savoy records noted 53 Sundays and 42 holidays, leaving 270 days on which craftsmen could be employed. The masons, however, enjoyed a number of paid holidays, receiving wages for a total of 301 days that year. See Charlotte A. Stanford, *The Building Accounts of the Savoy Hospital, London, 1512–1520*. Westminster Abbey Records Series, VIII (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2015), 20.

There is little evidence that wives of London carpenters were directly involved in the craft; their financial contributions to the household were either invisible or from a different source altogether (such as brewing ale or huckstering).<sup>13</sup> However, guild rules prohibited carpenters themselves from adopting too diverse an employment portfolio, and they decreed “that no man(er) p(er)sone of the said Crafte fromhensforth take uppon hym any other werke to doo as in Masonrie plommery dawbyng Tilyng or any other man(er) werke savyng oonly that that belongeth to Carpentrie.”<sup>14</sup> These rules were not always followed, despite the fine prescribed for violators, but the articles did not forbid merchant activity involving building materials. Indeed, the Master and Wardens of the guild had authority to check the quality of timber sold in the City and, if the circumstances warranted, impound it.<sup>15</sup> It is no surprise therefore that a number of the more successful guild members embraced this lucrative aspect of the trade. For instance, John Russell, Sr., acted in 1513 as a purveyor, or contractor for delivery of building materials at King’s College Chapel, Cambridge, while John Russell, Jr. dealt in timber and other building necessities nearly two decades later at Whitehall (see Table 3).<sup>16</sup>

But the main trade for a skilled carpenter was obviously the trade for which he had trained. It was not an easy training. Apprenticeships lasted on average seven years and had to be held by candidates who were physically fit for the demanding labor: an aspiring apprentice was to be presented for inspection by the guild to prove

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**13** Women of course formed important marriage alliances between craft households, either of the same (or related) trades, as noted in Ransome, “Artisan Dynasties” (see note 8 and Table 1), though they seldom seem to have been active in the building crafts on their own behalf. Leach discusses how widows might make arrangements for a late husband’s apprentice; see Leach, “Carpenters” (see note 2), 148, 233. Huckstering, or petty food retail, was often practiced by women, as was ale brewing on the small scale (men dominated commercial brewing by the sixteenth century). See P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire, ca. 1300–1520* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 31; and Judith M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women’s Work in a Changing World, 1300–1600* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

**14** Article 18 of the 1487 Carpenters’ guild regulations, given in Marsh, *Records*, vol. 2 (see note 1), 252.

**15** Article 24 of the 1487 Carpenters’ guild regulations. Wives of “forren” carpenters incurred the guild’s wrath by making purchases of building materials that their husbands were forbidden to buy; article 25 allows the seizure of any building materials sold “between foreyn and foreyn,” Marsh, *Records*, vol. 2 (see note 1), 252.

**16** For John Russell Sr., see King’s College Cambridge Muniments, Building Accounts 1509–1515, as cited in Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 260, note 4. For John Russell Jr., see Westminster Abbey Muniments (hereafter referred to as WAM) 12257. John Jr. would have had the additional examples of his father Richard (1515, York Place) and father-in-law Humphrey Cooke (1515, Savoy), to help model goods merchandising. See the National Archives (hereafter TNA) E36/326, and WAM 3509, the latter printed in Stanford, *Building Accounts* (see note 12), 341.

**Table 3:** The Russells at York Place (later Whitehall).

Year	Craftsman	Task (if stated)	Amount per day	Months worked
1515 (under Wolsey)	Richard Russell	master carpenter dealer in timber	salary (not stated)	Feb–Mar, June– Sept, Nov–Dec
	John Russell (Jr.)	apprentice carpenter	4d	June–Dec
	Thomas Russell	carpenter	6d	May–June
1531 (under Henry VIII)	John Russell (Jr.)	dealer in timber and other goods	market prices	April
1542 (under Henry VIII)	John Russell (Jr.)	dealer in timber and other goods	market prices	July–Aug

**Sources:** PRO E 36/326; WAM 12257; BL MS Add 10109.

**Note:** The use of parentheses around Sr. or Jr. indicates this designation is deduced rather than overtly stated in the manuscript.

“that he be not lame, croked ne deformed.”<sup>17</sup> Though apprenticeship enrollments and completion notifications are patchy in this period, the records suggest that the rate of attrition was high, with just over half of those who began carpentry apprenticeships completing them.<sup>18</sup> Those who did not go on to enroll as full members of the London guild may have given up on the trade, moved to other towns, or kept working as part of the vast labor pool simply because they were lacking the capital to pay the substantial fees that were required to give them the freedom of the city.<sup>19</sup> The building trades constantly employed such semi-skilled labor, as records like the London bridge accounts make clear.<sup>20</sup> Private enterprise also no doubt employed many within the capital, but very few records of private construction survive.

Carpentry was not necessarily or even primarily a family business. As Vanessa Harding has demonstrated, London apprentices more often than not chose trades

**17** Article 22 of the 1487 Carpenters’ guild regulations, given in Marsh, *Records*, vol. 2 (see note 1), 249.

**18** From 1540 to 1590 only about 55 percent of the carpenters’ apprentices noted in the record appeared to have taken up the freedom of the city (that is, completed their training and enrolled as craft masters), while between 1477 and 1521 the rate was dramatically lower (only about 8 percent). High mortality rates and poor record keeping alone cannot account for such numbers; the “drop-out” rate for carpenter training was clearly substantial. See Leach, “Carpenters” (see note 2), 145.

**19** There do not appear to have been standard rates for purchasing redemption of the city (fees could range in the fifteenth century from 26s 8d to 53s 4d). Apprentice enrollment fees were typically 12d per person until 1508, when the fee was increased suddenly to 3s each; further fees would be paid on completion of the apprenticeship. See Leach, “Carpenters” (see note 2), 113, 137.

**20** Laura Wright and Vanessa Harding, *London Bridge: Selected Accounts and Rentals, 1381–1538*. London Record Society Publications, 31 (London: London Record Society, 1995).



**Table 4:** The Russells at the Savoy Hospital, the Strand (by calendar year).

Year	Craftsman	Task (if stated)	Amount per day	Months worked
1514	John Russell (Jr.)	laborer	4d	July
	John Russell (Sr.)	carpenter	6d	Sept
			7d	Oct
1515	John Russell (Jr.)	laborer and	4d (as laborer)	Feb–early Apr
		apprentice carpenter	5d (as apprentice)	late Apr–July
	John Russell (Sr.)	carpenter	7d	Feb
	Robert Russell	carpenter	5d	May
	Thomas Russell	carpenter	7d	Feb–Apr
		joiner	8d	May–June
			6d	July
1517	Thomas Russell	making shutters	taskwork	May
		making lantern ceiling	taskwork	Sept

**Source:** WAM 63509. Also published in Stanford, *Building Accounts* (see note 12).

**Note:** The use of parentheses around Sr. or Jr. indicates this designation is deduced rather than overtly stated in the manuscript.

**Table 5:** The Russells at St. Margaret’s Parish Church, Westminster.

Year	Craftsman	Task (if stated)	Amount per day	Days paid
1517–1518	Richard Russell	chancel roof	8d	5
		scaffolding	8d	4
	John Russell Sr.	—	8d	165
	John Russell Jr.	—	8d	149
	Thomas, Russell	—	7d	171
	“joiner”	ceiling wainscot over the altar	20s (taskwork rate)*	—
	Robert Russell (Sr.)	—	6d	136
	Robert Russell (Jr.)	—	4d	5s

**Source:** WAM 23602.

**Notes:** Years extend from Michelmas to Michelmas (i.e., 29 September 1499 to 29 September 1500). The use of parentheses around Sr. or Jr. indicates this designation is deduced rather than overtly stated in the manuscript.

\* Taskwork rate involves being paid by the piece, or whole task, rather than by a daily wage. It was common to subcontract out discrete specialty items in this manner (e.g., decorative corbel carvings, chamber vaults, large pieces of furniture, etc.).

different from their fathers.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, fathers rarely formally enrolled their own sons as their apprentices, although John Russell Jr. did work under his father, Richard, who was Cardinal Wolsey's master carpenter of works at York Place in 1515. (John Jr.'s earliest recorded apprentice work began under the aegis of Thomas Russell at the Savoy hospital, a rather more common pattern; see Tables 4 and 5.) Close bonds were formed as much between master and apprentice as between family members, the masters helping train and set up their apprentices in their trades and often remembering them in wills.<sup>22</sup> Marriage, of course, could make a family member out of a talented apprentice, and John Jr. employed this strategy too when he married Christian Cooke, daughter of his former supervisor at the Savoy. Indeed, as successful as John Russell Jr. was, it was the Cooke connection – including the lucrative properties left to John Jr. when his father-in-law died – that helped propel him into real prominence. John Jr. went from succeeding his father as master carpenter at York Place by 1531, to succeeding his father-in-law as King's Master Carpenter the following year, and by 1550 he was one of the Masters of the London Carpenters' Company.<sup>23</sup>

The Russells were unusual, if not unique, in forming something of a carpenter dynasty.<sup>24</sup> Of course, to be a Russell of Westminster was not automatically a guarantee of interest or ability in the woodworking trades. William, the elder brother of John Jr., was a successful wax-chandler, and John Jr.'s son Francis, capitalizing on

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**21** Vanessa Harding, "Sons, Apprentices, and Successors in Late Medieval and Early Modern London: The Transmission of Skills and Work Opportunities," *Generations in Towns: Succession and Success in Pre-Industrial Urban Societies*, eds. Finn-Einar Eliassen, and Katalin Szende (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), 153–68.

**22** For example, the carpenter Edward Penson left his apprentice a number of tools and forgave him a portion of his term; see Harding, "Sons, Apprentices and Successors" (see note 21), 156. In the case of John Russell Sr.'s will, primogeniture prevailed over trade choice, as it was the elder son, William (discussed later), who inherited his father's tenement, the "Bell" in King Street; Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 261. A former apprentice as son-in-law could step into both roles, as in the case of John Russell Jr. for his wife's father Humphrey Cooke; see Ransome, "Artisan Dynasties" (see note 8), 242.

**23** In this instance, the term *Master* indicates that he was the head officer of the guild, rather than simply one of the "craft masters" who were guild members. See E. B. Jupp and W. W. Pocock, *Historical Account of the Most Worshipful Company of Carpenters* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1887), as cited in Harvey *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 262, n. 14.

**24** Famous mason dynasties existed, of course, like the Parlers of late-fourteenth century Germany; see *Die Parler und der Schöne Stil 1350–1400: Europäische Kunst unter den Luxemburgern: Ausstellung des Schnütgen-Museums in der Kunsthalle Köln 1978*, ed. Anton Legner (Cologne: Schnütgen Museum, 1978); and Klaus Jürgen Herrmann, *Parlerbauten – Architektur, Skulptur, Restaurierung: Internationales Parler-Symposium, Schwäbisch Gmünd, 17.–19 Juli 2001* (Stuttgart: Landesdenkmalamt Baden-Württemberg, 2004). For further discussion of William and Francis Russell, see Ransome, "Artisan Dynasties" (see note 8), 240–41 and 243.

**Table 6:** The Russells at Westminster Abbey's "New Work".

Year	Craftsman	Task (if stated)	Amount per day	Days paid
1499–1500	Richard Russell	scaffolding	8d	15
	Robert Russell (Sr.)	—	6d	23
1500–1501	Robert Russell (Sr.)	—	5 ½ d	30
	Thomas Russell	—	5 ½ d	30
1501–1502	Richard Russell	scaffolding	8d	42
	Richard Russell	"framing new work"	taskwork rate (£17)	N/A
1502–1503	Richard Russell	scaffolding	8d	73
1503–1504	Richard Russell	"new scaffolding"	8d	48
1504–1505	Richard Russell	scaffolding	8d	89
	Robert Russell	---	7d	4
1505–1506	Richard Russell	"new scaffolding"	8d	13
1507–1508	Richard Russell	scaffolding for the "new work"	8d	50
	Robert Russell (Sr.)	"the same"	7d	181
1508–1509	Richard Russell	"new work scaffolding"	8d	4
1509–1510	Richard Russell	scaffolding	8d	3
1510–1511	Richard Russell	—	8d	3
1511–1512	Richard Russell	scaffolding	8d	26
1512–1513	Richard Russell	scaffolding	8d	26
1513–1514	Richard Russell	—	8d	22
	Robert Russell (Sr.)	—	8d	47
	Thomas Russell	—	8d	34
1514–1515	Richard Russell	bell wheels	8d	8
	John Russell (Sr.)	bell wheels	8d	31
1515–1516	Richard Russell	"diverse parts" of the church	8d	17
	John Russell (Sr.)	"working with him"	8d	38
1523–1524	Robert Russell (Jr.?)	—	7d	—
1525–1526	Robert Russell (Jr.?)	—	7d	—

**Sources:** WAM 23577, 23579–23582, 23584–23593, 23596–23600, 23612–23614.

**Notes:** Years extend from Michelmas to Michelmas (i.e., 29 September 1499 to 29 September 1500). The use of parentheses around Sr. or Jr. indicates this designation is deduced rather than overtly stated in the manuscript.

doubt on the financial successes of his father and maternal grandfather, claimed the rank of “gentleman,” abandoning the carpentry trade altogether.<sup>25</sup> We do not know the origins of the Russell family, or how or where they trained.<sup>26</sup> However, it is certain that several members of the Russell family were well established at Westminster, working together in the carpentry business by 1500. By the early sixteenth century, four members of their family were employed on Westminster Abbey’s “new works” – which at this period focused on the vaulting of the nave at the west end. These men were John Russell Sr., Robert Russell Sr., Thomas Russell, and Richard Russell (see Table 6). The relationship between these men is not clear. John Harvey suggests that they were of the same generation, and may have been either brothers or cousins.<sup>27</sup> Members of the younger generation, notably Robert Jr. and John Jr., began their careers about 1515, shortly before several members of the elder generation died. We do not know much about Robert Jr. (not even which of the older generation was his father), but John Jr.’s career and marriage put him prominently into the documentary records. Harvey’s landmark biographical dictionary of English medieval architects traces the course of John’s career (as well as those of his father, Richard, and namesake, John Sr.), but omits mention of the third generation (Ric or Richard Jr. and John III) who appear only in glimpses in pay records of the 1530s and 1540s. The role of the women is also shadowy, though clearly important, as Richard’s daughter Joan married the carpenter Guy Gaskyn, who then worked closely with his wife’s family (see Table 1).<sup>28</sup>

What the surviving documents do reveal, however, is the family’s abilities in scaffolding – especially for the older generation. Such a specialization is not an aspect of the building trade that has received much attention, because building accounts generally do not make a point of noting the strengths of individual

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<sup>25</sup> William provided the abbey with large amounts of wax for tapers throughout the years (WAM 19826–37). The last of these documents, dated 1540, was a posthumous bill submitted by his executors. Another William Russell, possibly his son, carried on the business; this William sold candles and necessities to Westminster palace construction workshop in 1542 and 1543 (British Library MS Add 10109).

<sup>26</sup> Harvey notes a Richard Russell, carver at Lambeth palace, fl. 1434, who may or may not have been an ancestor: Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 264. Russell was not an uncommon name, as witness Henry VIII’s noted courtier Sir John Russell, who was no relation at all. Rather more ambiguous is the Henry Russell who was noted as the keeper of the Whitehall privy garden in 1541 (see MS E H B192, Bodleian Library, Oxford); he was presumably too old to be identified with John Jr.’s younger son, but may have been connected to the Westminster Russells in some other fashion.

<sup>27</sup> Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 264.

<sup>28</sup> Besides Joan’s husband, other marriage connections brought tilers, bricklayers, and masons into the family; see Ransome, “Artisan Dynasties” (see note 8), 245–47.

craftsmen. Payroll documents were interested in accounting for moneys spent, and they did not always bother to list the names of their employees, especially the laborers (see Table 2). Even in a relatively thorough account, like the building of the late-fifteenth-century wharf at Vauxhall, details often remain minor, like “Paid John Russell for working on ‘le frame’ of the said wharf for 34 days at 8d/day.”<sup>29</sup> In most building accounts the focus is usually on the group’s work as a whole rather than individual contributions.

Some details can be gleaned about individual craftsmen, of course. The first listed has seniority and his pay rate often indicates a higher standing.<sup>30</sup> Also, individuals are often mentioned when specialty items or finishing work are involved. The Savoy building accounts provide excellent examples of this with Thomas Russell, who completed two taskwork contracts there in 1517: first, he was paid for 41 shutter “leaves” in May for the main hospital windows, and again in September of that year he was paid for the internal ceiling of the crossing lantern (Table 4). He also worked 171 days that year at St Margaret’s church, and furthermore he was contracted for the taskwork job of finishing the ceiling wainscot over the altar (Table 5). Yet another entry for “Thomas Roossell of Westminster” appears in 1517 at Oxford for carving 141 roof bosses for the chapel roof at Corpus Christi College at 16d a boss.<sup>31</sup> Thomas evidently had a busy year, but such busyness may not have been as exceptional as all that; most skilled artisans could keep as busy if they were willing to commute.

Unlike fine carving work, scaffolding rarely receives detailed notice in the accounts, but evidence of it does occur. The elder generation of Russells appears early in this context at Westminster Abbey. We do not know where they received their training, but by 1476 John Russell Sr. was employed there as a carpenter; he also worked on the construction of five new timber-framed tenements in Tothill Street in 1486–87.<sup>32</sup> By 1490, if not earlier, the abbey was employing Richard Russell as a carpenter also. By 1499 Robert Sr. had also been added to the payroll (Table 6). It is not known what exact relationship each of these men had to one another; Harvey suggested that they might be brothers or cousins.<sup>33</sup>

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29 See Nic Woodward-Smith and John Schofield, “A Late Fifteenth-Century Account for a Wharf at Vauxhall, London,” *London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* 28 (1977): 278–91, 283.

30 For instance, John Russell Sr. can be identified as the foreman of the wharf project construction noted in WAM 23547; Woodward-Smith and Schofield, “A Late Fifteenth-Century Account” (see note 29,) 284. Several of the skills needed to erect a wharf safely would incidentally have translated well over into scaffolding construction, thus demonstrating another senior Russell family member’s ability in this field.

31 Corpus Christi College MS 435, fol. 53, as cited in Salzman, *Building in England* (see note 4), 217, n. 3.

32 Woodward-Smith and Schofield, “A Late Fifteenth-Century Account” (see note 29), 284.

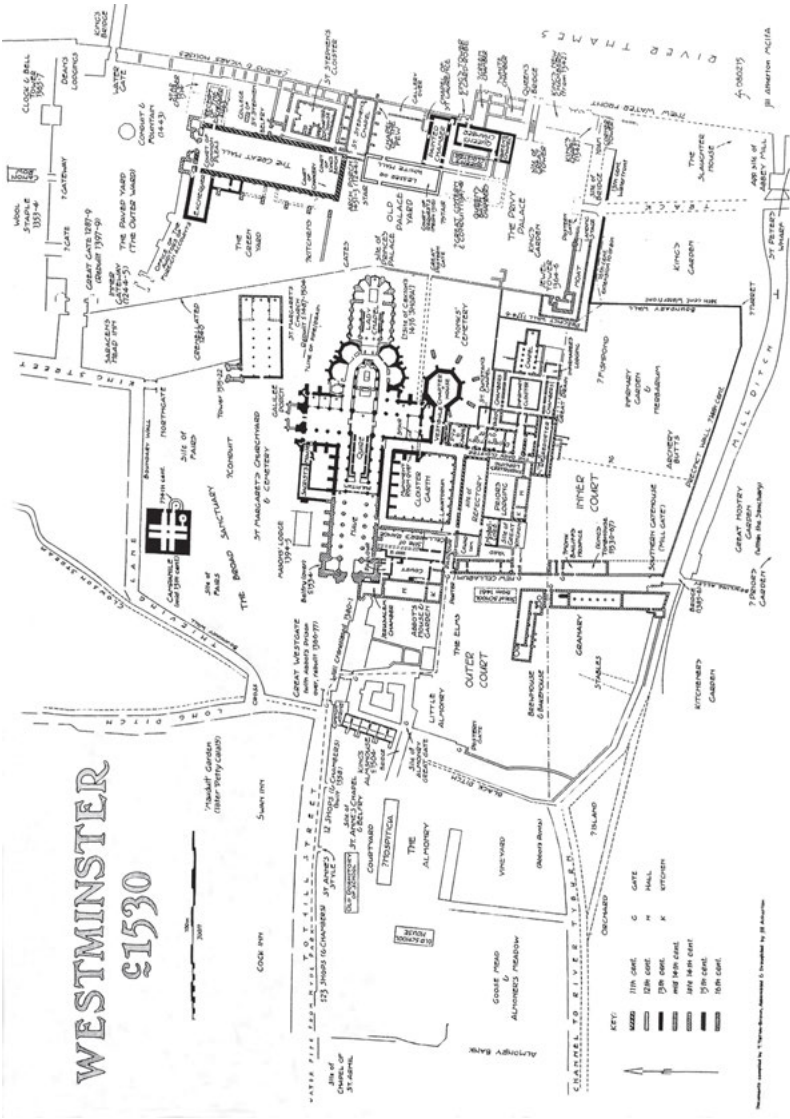
33 Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 260.

By the sixteenth century, Richard appears to have become the chief representative of the Russell family in the nave works, as John fades from the record and does not reappear until 1514. However, this does not mean that Richard worked more than his fellow carpenters; in fact, the reverse is usually true. Richard did make more, usually 8d per day (compared to the usual carpenter rate of 6d per day; see Table 6.) At the same time, he usually worked fewer days than his fellows. The higher pay rate does not appear to have been calibrated specifically as compensation for the shorter employment period; rather, it reflects contemporary practice in paying the senior (and presumably more skilled) craftsmen at a greater wage. It is somewhat unusual that the master carpenter would not have been on salary, though the record notes his pay as a “stipend”; the master mason, Robert Stowell, is listed as receiving a “stipend” of 100s for that year, a similar nomenclature (if not similar remuneration).<sup>34</sup> The fact that Richard Russell worked fewer days than the other carpenters is more likely evidence of his employment at other building sites. (Indeed, for him to remain financially solvent for the year he would have had to be employed at more than one site.) The top men in the building trades often were paid a flat fee regardless of absence or presence, which allowed craftsmen like Robert Stowell to be absentee organizers who worked on simultaneous commissions, leaving the day-to-day running of the workshop to a warden who was paid a per-day wage. Richard Russell’s rate of pay and the fact that his “stipend” seems to have been based on actual days worked, appears to show that Richard held more of this latter warden’s role.

Richard’s pay entry does provide some insight into his specific responsibilities: he is listed as receiving remuneration “for the scaffolds and other necessities for the year.” Scaffolding would of course be the responsibility of any competent supervisor, be he master or warden. It was also key to contemporary works at Westminster, which was struggling to complete its nave vaults. The form of these vaults was very conservative, following the choir design laid out more than two centuries earlier by Master Henry of Reyns and the Francophile wishes of the abbey’s key patron, Henry III (r. 1216–1272). Henry’s generosity had allowed for rapid erection of the abbey’s liturgically important east end (which was also fortuitously close to his own elegant Palace of Westminster, see Fig. 3).<sup>35</sup> After this king’s death and the subsequent loss of royal funding, however, construction slowed to a glacial pace. Despite efforts to reduce costs (notably by omitting the expensive diaper work carving in the spandrels; see Figs. 4 and 5), the abbey

<sup>34</sup> See WAM 23577 for Robert Stowell.

<sup>35</sup> On the site of today’s Parliament house (Fig. 4). For excellent discussion on the relationship between the palace and abbey as it developed, see *Westminster: The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey and Palace*, ed. Warwick Rodwell and Tim Tatton-Brown, 2 vols. Conference Transactions of the British Archaeological Association, 29 (Wakefield, UK: Maney Publishing, 2015).



**Fig. 3:** Plan of Westminster, ca. 1530. (Drawing by Jill Atherton after research by Tim Tatton-Brown, from Tim Tatton-Brown, "The Medieval and Early Tudor Topography of Westminster," *The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey, BAA Conference Transactions*, vol. 39 part I (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2015). Photo courtesy British Archaeological Association).



**Fig. 4:** Westminster abbey, view from the choir triforium to the west. Choir designed by Master Henry of Reyns ca. 1243. (Photo: © Charlotte A. Stanford, with permission of Dean and Chapter of Westminster).

struggled to finance the completion of so great a structure. The “new work” of covering the vaults at the west end of the nave was frequently allotted less than £100 per year, a small percentage of the abbey’s total budget, and much less than the £1,000 or more per year that had been the norm under Henry III.<sup>36</sup> Whereas in

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<sup>36</sup> Barbara Harvey, *The Obedientiaries of Westminster Abbey and their Financial Records*, vol. 3 of the Westminster Abbey Records Series (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2002), in later years the payments for construction rose to 118 or even 125 pounds (1515); compare this to the £20,000 allotted by Henry VII for his Lady Chapel; see Tim Tatton-Brown, “The Building History of the Lady Chapels,” *Westminster Abbey: The Lady Chapel of Henry VII*, ed. Tim Tatton-Brown and Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2003), 189–204; here 193.





**Fig. 5:** Westminster abbey, southwest aisle vaults looking up to central nave north side elevation. (Photo: © Charlotte A. Stanford, with permission of Dean and Chapter of Westminster).

Henry's time the building works employed up to 341 workmen a year, by 1500 the monastic supervisor's records note the employment of only 25 persons.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the slow pace and low budget, employing Richard Russell and his colleagues to prepare scaffolds for the vault was a step that indicated the abbey was serious about completion of the work. That year the masons were paid for 40–48 weeks, and the second-senior mason, Thomas Redman, was paid for 18 weeks' worth of "setting"; all further indications show that the 45 cartloads of

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<sup>37</sup> For construction under Henry III, see A. Richard Jones, "Numerical Archaeology," *Westminster*, ed. Rodwell and Tatton-Brown, vol. 1 (see note 35), 104–28; here 126. Jones notes too that in 1253, 226 days were actual work days, minus the holidays and Sundays. For the year 1499–1500, see WAM 23577. The small core work force consisted of a master mason, four regular masons and two apprentices, who were supported by eight laborers. The carpenters' group was smaller still, consisting of six individuals, two of whom were members of the Russell family. There was also a smith, a plumber – to work the lead sheets that covered the timbers of the roof – and two carters for moving materials.

Reigate stone purchased from the quarry and laboriously carted to the worksite were being prepared and installed in the bays.<sup>38</sup>

By 1501, Richard Russell's scaffolding tasks were keeping him occupied for over a month's worth of work (Table 6). However, he was also employed in "framing new work," for which he was paid a taskwork rate. The scribe who noted this lump sum, £17, did not specify the "new work," but the amount is a rather middling sum, only enough for a rather minor project. The wording of a more expensive taskwork project "in great," however, notes the taskwork contractor's obligation to provide "framing, making, full finishing, and setting up of all manner of works"; Richard's project was likely of this independent kind.<sup>39</sup>

Scaffolding continued to assume more of Richard's time for the next several years, until 1505–1506, when the work dramatically dropped once again (Table 6). It rose the following year when Robert Russell joined him at the slightly lower wage of 7d per day. Robert, however, worked 181 days in comparison with Richard's 50. By contrast with the rest of the workforce that year, however, the carpenters kept well occupied: only two masons can be identified securely, and of those one was the master and the other appears to have held a warden's role.<sup>40</sup> Some of the mason crew was likely diverted to the foundation of Henry VII's new Lady Chapel, which was being erected at the abbey's east end (although we cannot be certain who or how many, as unfortunately the Lady Chapel construction records were kept separately and do not survive.) It is perhaps notable, though, that in the following three years, Richard's involvement with the nave scaffolding dropped to a negligible four, and then three, days per year. While we cannot know the

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<sup>38</sup> See WAM 23577.

<sup>39</sup> The 1532 contract between the abbey and John Wyllton of London, carpenter, for "a bargain in great" to build the hermitage of Rouncevalle, cost £51 7s 9d (WAM 12257). Though the hermitage was triple the cost of Russell's task piece, the abbey complex abounded with mills, kitchens, bakehouses, rental properties and other such structures, one of which might have been built or renovated at this time; see Tim-Tatton Brown, "The New Work: Aspects of the Later Medieval Fabric of the Abbey," in *Westminster*, ed. Rodwell and Tatton-Brown, vol. 1 (see note 35), 312–24.

<sup>40</sup> The other workers for that year are noted as working *with* the masons rather than *as* masons; moreover, they worked for a lower day wage commensurate with a laborer's rate (4d, or 2s 4d a week). Thomas Redman or Redmayne and Mr. Stubbs were both paid for 52 weeks' worth at the site, both at a rate of 3s 4d per week. Redman also received a 100s stipend and 13s 4d for clothing; Stubbs received 10s for clothing. Neither would have actually worked every week of the year, given the number of holidays common to the period, but masons, especially senior masons, were sometimes given the "perk" of paid holidays; see Salzman, *Building* (see note 4), 66, 70. By contrast the masons' laborers, William Watson and John Paye, worked only 67 ½ days. It is not clear whether Thomas Golding (11 days at 8d per day) and Robert Teony (78 days at 8d per day) were carpenters or masons, but they clearly held a middle position between the senior officials and the semi-skilled day laborers.

whole range of Richard's employment, it seems reasonable to assume that, as a trusted and competent artisan, he would have been tapped for this prestigious work (Figs. 3 and 6).<sup>41</sup>



**Fig. 6:** Lady Chapel of Henry VII, 1503–1519, Westminster abbey, view to the east. (Photo: © Charlotte A. Stanford, with permission of Dean and Chapter of Westminster).

By 1513, however, Richard and Robert were putting in more time on the “new work” of the nave. In these years their efforts are not described as scaffold work (though this may simply have been an omission on the part of the scribe). By 1514, their tasks were earmarked for work on the “bell wheels,” indicating the creation of the bell frame hung in the west tower.<sup>42</sup> By 1515, their tasks are marked simply as “within diverse parts of the church.” At the same time, large amounts of wood,

<sup>41</sup> See the persuasive case that Richard Russell was almost certainly responsible for the roof of the Lady Chapel by Julian Munby, “The Roofs of Henry VII’s Chapel,” *Westminster Abbey: The Lady Chapel*, ed. Tatton-Brown and Mortimer (see note 36), 215–17.

<sup>42</sup> Probably in the northwest tower built under Abbot Islip and finished 1531. See Tatton-Brown, “The New Work,” *Westminster*, ed. Rodwell and Tatton-Brown, vol. 1 (see note 35), 312–24; here 316.

ropes and nails purchased within these same years indicate preparations for the roof timbering above the nave vaults. Though covered by lead sheets from above and hidden from view by the vaulting below, these complex timber structures were essential to the integrity of the building. The Russells, particularly Richard, no doubt had a hand in engineering this awesome structure. That the roofing was being put in place in 1515 is confirmed by a hefty payment to Thomas Egerton, plumber, who submitted a (lost) itemized bill, as did his colleague John Philip the smith, who would have provided the nails to fasten the lead sheets to the timbers.<sup>43</sup>

The roof done, the Russells left the Westminster nave *en masse* to attend to another project: the rebuilding of their parish church (Table 5; Figs. 3, 7 and 8).<sup>44</sup> St. Margaret's was but a stone's throw from the abbey's north portal, but the parishioners were clearly keen to have their own house of worship. The abbey cooperated, helping to pay for the chancel costs, while the parish raised funds for the nave and tower. It was the abbey's new work fund that paid for a full season's work from John Sr., John Jr., Thomas and Robert Sr., with additional contributions by Richard, Robert Jr. and a second Thomas, described as a "joiner" or finisher, who worked on the elegant ceiling wainscot (Fig. 8). This kind of timber covering was far less costly than stone vaulting and moreover appeared in numerous fashionable houses, such as York Place, where Richard, Thomas and John Jr. had all been employed since 1515. Thomas Wolsey, their employer, had been anxious enough to secure their services that he had already allowed John Jr. and Thomas to overlap their terms of employment with him and the close of the Savoy hospital project. Local loyalty to their parish church might also have given the Russells impetus to agree to concentrate on this project, at least for the first year. Richard could less easily be spared, as he headed the York Place workshop. It was not this mastership, though, that dictated the number of days he spent at St. Margaret's, but his death on 14 May 1517.<sup>45</sup> To the last, true to form, Richard's work included the unsung but vital task of scaffolding.

The records of St. Margaret's, however, do not indicate "specialization" tasks for all the Russell carpenters. It is abundantly clear that Richard was a scaffolding

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<sup>43</sup> A *tegulator*, or roof tiler, was also employed this year, one John Hill, together with a probable assistant, Robert Sewer. Tile was not normally used on English church nave roofs but could be used for smaller roofing structures (like cloister walkways). The cloisters were being paved this year by Thomas Churchman and William Grene, paviors who were working "in the cloister and other parts of the church." See WAM 23598.

<sup>44</sup> For the rebuilding of St. Margaret's, see H. F. Westlake, *St. Margaret's, Westminster: The Church of the House of Commons* (London: Smith, Elder, 1914). Work still went on at the abbey over the next decade, as several masons were employed, some paid specifically for "setting" tasks, but no carpenters were listed in the building accounts until 1523 (WAM 23609–10).

<sup>45</sup> Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 263.



**Fig. 7:** St. Margaret's parish church, Westminster. Sixteenth century rebuilding and eighteenth century restoration of the west front and tower. (Photo: © Charlotte A. Stanford).



**Fig. 8:** Interior of St. Margaret's, Westminster, with paneled timber ceilings. View of nave looking east; rebuilding 1486–1523 with chancel ca. 1515–1523. (Photo: with permission of Dean and Chapter of Westminster).

expert (among other things), but can the rest of his family be assumed to share this reputation? The evidence for such a scenario is, admittedly, circumstantial. But nevertheless it is suggestive; some, if not all, of the family may well have shared this particular reputation. His son John Jr. in particular is a good candidate for such expertise, and it is the records of the Savoy hospital in the Strand that suggest such an interpretation.

Work at the Savoy had possibly begun as early as 1505 with clearing the site and restoring some of the waterfront outbuildings, but the records of the main work do not commence until 1512. These records clearly indicate the hierarchy of workers as well as the rates of pay. Masons were listed first, then joiners and carpenters, followed by sawyers (those who sawed the boards), bricklayers, plasterers, the clerk, and finally the semi-skilled day laborers who did the heavy lifting. Although masons had pride of place in the listing, the master mason, John Elmer, and the master carpenter, Humphrey Cooke, were both paid equally: 6 shillings a week, or a shilling a day, roughly double what an ordinary carpenter earned.<sup>46</sup> Also, both were on salary, allowing them to collect their pay on holidays and despite any absences – which were frequent for both men, as they traveled a great deal, overseeing multiple projects. Cooke acted during these years as a consulting expert at Eton College and also ran a lucrative subcontracting business hauling wood and bricks for construction.<sup>47</sup>

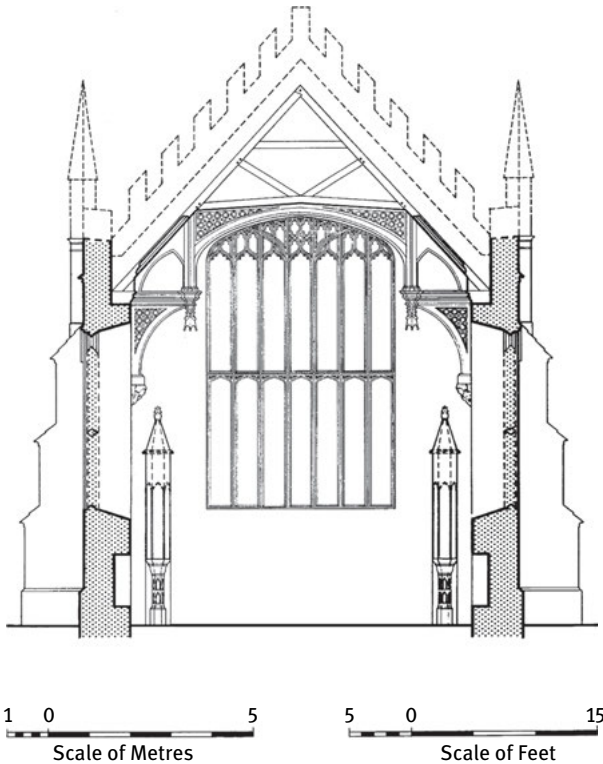
The Russells were not employed at the Savoy site until the latter half of 1514, when work on the main hall's hammerbeam ceiling was likely begun (Fig. 9). The first mention of any Russell is in July of that year, with "John Russell" listed as a laborer for 4d per day, the normal laborer's wage (Table 4). His wage rate and rank identifies him as John Jr. Not a few apprentices in the building trade began with a stint as day laborer before commencing a formal apprenticeship, which he seems to have done the following year, appearing in the records on 16 April, at the very end of the list of carpenters. (Another family member in an apprentice situation also appears briefly at the Savoy: Robert Jr., who worked for a short period at the Savoy's usual apprentice wage of 5d per day near the peak period of work, in May 1515 [Table 4].)

When John Jr. joined the Savoy workshop, it was at a time when the major task of roofing was probably about to commence. The records show a spike in the number of carpenters beginning in this month, accelerating to what was obviously a major effort to complete the structure. Though the Savoy wage records do not specify what portion of the building was being constructed at any given time, a second portion of the manuscript, which lists the costs of materials and various

<sup>46</sup> A shilling was 12d (12 pence); 20 shillings made up a pound.

<sup>47</sup> For his work at Eton, see Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 64; for his subcontracting activities, see Stanford, *Building Accounts* (see note 12), 342, 360, 369.

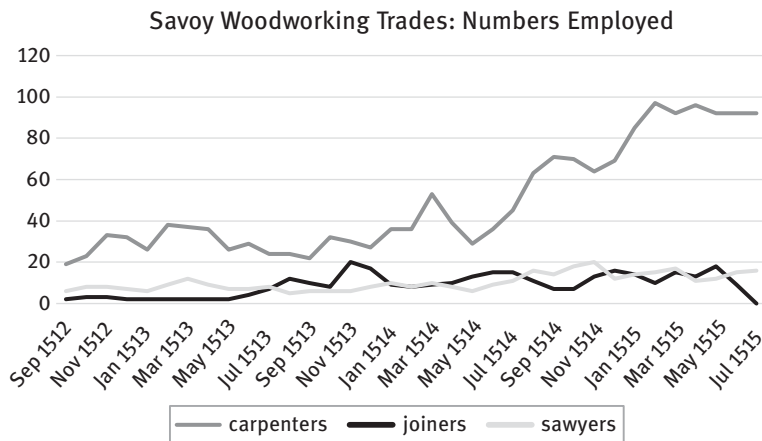
taskwork items, notes that stone and timber angels were already being carved for the main hospital roof corbels by July 1514 (see Fig. 9). The increased number of woodworkers from summer 1514 on indicate that the ceilings and roofs were particular targets (Fig. 10). The commencement of the ceiling works would align



**Fig. 9:** Section view across transept of the main ward of the Savoy hospital, looking north. Hammerbeam openwork roof design by Master Humphrey Cooke, ca. 1515. (Photo: Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, courtesy of the Open Government License Agreement).

well with the need for a scaffolding expert, and John Jr. could have been a useful resource, if not the sole authority. It is suggestive also that July 1514 notes the one and only use of the term “scaffolder” in the wage record, applied to the long-term employee John Sabean, who had been with the workshop since December 1512.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Sabean is listed on the payroll from Dec 1512–Feb 1513, and then is absent until Dec 1513. However, he remained continuously in the Savoy's employ thereafter until the conclusion of the record in Jul 1515.



**Fig. 10:** Savoy woodworking trades: numbers employed. (Image: © Charlotte A. Stanford)

**Source:** Image: Charlotte A. Stanford.

**Data source:** WAM 63509. Also published in *The Building Accounts of the Savoy Hospital, London (1512–1520)*, ed. Charlotte A. Stanford. Westminster Abbey Records Series, vol. VIII (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2015).

Sabean began his career as a laborer at 4d per day but with the change in his job description came a wage increase to 5d per day. The term is only used once. Thereafter Sabean’s description reverted to “laborer” but his wage remained at the higher rate, as did his senior standing, near the list of workers in that category. But by May of 1515, Sabean is described as “carpenter,” recorded in that category, and paid the normal carpenter wage of 6d per day. Clearly he was serving out his own apprenticeship during the construction of the Savoy.<sup>49</sup>

John Russell Jr. was clearly well positioned to train for work on ceilings at the Savoy, which were wrought of timber rather than stone-vaulted.<sup>50</sup> The site’s master carpenter, Humphrey Cooke, was simultaneously designing the hammerbeam roof at the great hall of Cardinal (later Corpus Christi) College, Oxford (Fig. 11).<sup>51</sup> This hall, which survives, was completed just slightly after the now-vanished main ward building of the Savoy. It bears intricately-carved, lantern-like pendants at the centers and edges of the hammerbeams, which rest in turn on carved

<sup>49</sup> Sabean does not appear in the warden’s accounts for the London carpenters’ company, however, so it is impossible to say how formal his apprenticeship actually was.

<sup>50</sup> The one exception is the gatehouse vault, which was a task subcontracted to John Elmer, the site’s master mason; Stanford, *Building Accounts* (see note 12), 372.

<sup>51</sup> Cooke’s work on the Corpus Christi hall began in 1514 and ended in 1518; see Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 64.





**Fig. 11:** Hammerbeam ceiling of great hall, Christ College (formerly Cardinal College), Oxford. Designed ca. 1515 by Master Humphrey Cooke. (Photo: © Charlotte A. Stanford).

masonry corbels. The Oxford corbels bear a floral motif but the Savoy's choice of angel corbels was clearly a nod to the angel motif featured at Westminster Palace Hall, only a mile away from the hospital site.<sup>52</sup>

Cooke also designed the chapel ceiling (Fig. 12), which followed a paneled and flattened form rather than the open timber work of the main building. It spectacularly employs batten designs, painted and gilded, which remained very fashionable over the next two decades (Fig. 13). The Savoy patterns consisted of 138 panels, linked in a series of quatrefoils, round interlocked with ogee-arched, with the former containing "badges" or "devices" honoring the Tudor lineage.<sup>53</sup> The accounts note the purchase of beechwood and wainscot (imported Baltic fir) panels, as well as "selyng

<sup>52</sup> Westminster Hall's massive hammerbeam ceiling spans 68 by 240 feet, the largest medieval timber roof in northern Europe. It was rebuilt under Richard II by the carpenter Hugh Herland and the mason Henry Yvele, although the angels at Westminster are positioned at the edges of the hammerbeams themselves, rather than the supporting corbels; see Julian Munby, "The Late-Fourteenth-Century Reconstruction of Westminster Hall," *Westminster*, ed. Rodwell and Tatton-Brown, vol. 2 (see note 35), 120–32.

<sup>53</sup> These included the devices of noble families connected with the house of Lancaster (since the Savoy hospital was built on the site of the former mansion of the Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt). See Stanford, *Building Accounts* (see note 12), 28.



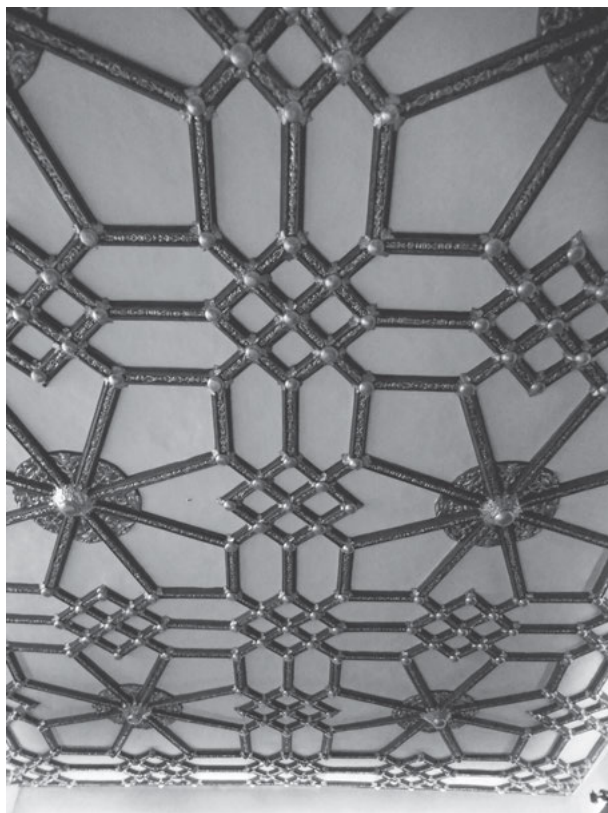
**Fig. 12:** Thomas Nash, giclée print of interior of the Queen's chapel of the Savoy, formerly the Savoy hospital chapel. Board and batten ceiling design by Master Humphrey Cooke, ca. 1515 (Photo copyright: Trustees of the British Library).

board,” which was probably pearwood.<sup>54</sup> The chapel ceiling was probably finished before the main ward's hammerbeam roof, since it was likely consecrated before April 1515, but John Jr. would have had opportunity to observe it in both his first and second periods of employment (Table 4). In his own work, he later had the opportunity to design ceilings of his own, notably the Presence Chamber of Hatfield Palace in 1546, and possibly also the roof of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1559–1560.<sup>55</sup>

Thomas Russell also came to the Savoy when John Jr. returned, in February 1515. For three months his name appears in the middle of a large group of carpenters, albeit of those in the higher-paid wage bracket (7d per day rather

<sup>54</sup> The Victorian restorer of the chapel ceiling, after a catastrophic fire in 1864, reported that much of the original work was of pear wood; see Robert Somerville, *The Savoy: Manor, Hospital, Chapel* (London: Duchy of Lancaster, 1960), 17.

<sup>55</sup> Harvey, *Mediaeval English Architects* (see note 8), 216.



**Fig. 13:** Ceiling with gilded battens, 1526–1528 with badges of Cardinal Wolsey, Hampton court palace. (Photo: © Charlotte A. Stanford, with kind permission of Historic Royal Palaces).

than 6d). By mid-May, however, his name had moved to the top of the list, directly after the master and warden. His wage also went up to 8d per day and he was categorized as “joiner” (although the Savoy clerk did not always clearly distinguish joinery and carpentry work, the term does tend to indicate that a craftsman was working primarily on finishing details.) This shift in hierarchy corresponded with an internal shakeup in the woodworking atelier: the chief joiner, one Bernard Rowland, suddenly vanishes from the records, along with the names of a handful of other senior craftsmen, most of them likely Flemish in origin.<sup>56</sup> Thomas stepped

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<sup>56</sup> While joiners, like carpenters, came and went, a handful of steadily-employed craftsmen also vanished from the record along with Rowland by May 1515: John Hawez, Godfrey Johnson, Peter Loyez, Antony Royest and Peter Whyte. Johnson in particular is a noted “Doche” (i.e., Flemish or German) name. See Martha Carlin, *Medieval Southwark* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon

into Rowland's place of seniority, over several other candidates; this indicates he was likely given responsibilities commensurate with that placing. Given Thomas's later contract for ceiling wainscot work at St. Margaret's (Table 5), he was likely assisting with the Savoy's ceilings as well: in addition to the chapel, the master's lodging also was paneled with a great deal of wainscot work.

Work at the Savoy accelerated during spring and summer of 1515 but by late June was beginning to taper off. While the numbers of carpenters employed did not greatly drop (see Fig. 10), the wages of some of the senior craftsmen did – including those of Thomas, who was only receiving 6d per day. There is no indication that his wage was being docked for sloppy work or bad behavior.<sup>57</sup> Circumstances imply that there may have been less to do on site. Other records confirm this surmise and also allow us to infer that Thomas was likely not spending full days on the site in any case. He had another position, at York Place.

York Place was the townhome of the archbishops of York, conveniently close to Westminster Palace (Fig. 1). Earlier that very year this important ecclesiastical post, along with all its residences and revenues, was claimed by the ambitious Thomas Wolsey, who was fast rising to be Henry VIII's right-hand man. Wolsey loved luxury and display, and in consequence began elaborate renovations for several of his residences; York Place was a key locale, as it was conveniently adjacent to Westminster palace.<sup>58</sup>

Wolsey, who had an eye for quality, hired three Russells to work on York Place in 1515: Richard, Thomas, and John Jr. He was obviously head-hunting talent, for though he was clearly anxious to remodel his property, he allowed all three men to complete previous tasks before taking up work for him full-time (and, as we have seen earlier, he also allowed these men a certain leave of absence to work on St. Margaret's two years later; see Table 5). Richard Russell was supervising the final phase of building work at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, when he took

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Press, 1996), 155. Individual foreigners in medieval England can be traced by name through the online database England's Immigrants 1330–1550 ([www.englishimmigrants.com](http://www.englishimmigrants.com), version 1.0; last accessed Sept. 9, 2017).

<sup>57</sup> Workers could have their wages docked for various reasons, including being tardy, lingering too long over meals, or doing shoddy work; see Salzman, *Building in England* (see note 4), 57, for examples of statutes that list financial penalties. Thomas, however, never had the clerk's notation for such penalty (a "qr" in the margin; see Stanford, *Building Accounts* (see note 12), xiv); moreover, he was rehired in 1517 for two important taskwork items, which would hardly have been the case had his work in June 1515 been unsatisfactory (see Table 4).

<sup>58</sup> Wolsey was also appointed chancellor in 1515. On his impact on the arts of Henry VIII's court, see *Cardinal Wolsey: Church, State and Art*, ed. S. J. Gunn and Phillip G. Lindley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Thurley, *Royal Palaces* (see note 4), 40.

up the offered post as master carpenter at York Place.<sup>59</sup> It was not uncommon, of course, for a master carpenter to work simultaneously on multiple projects: Humphrey Cooke's work at the Savoy overlapped a great deal with his commission at Cambridge and also another at Eton.<sup>60</sup> In this period, a master primarily provided designs or "plats"; his warden was the man on site who coordinated day-to-day details. It was somewhat less usual for one of the workshop craftsmen to be doubly employed, however. Thomas Russell's work must have been unusually excellent for him to overlap on the books at both the Savoy and York Place from May through July 1515. His family connections doubtless gave him an edge, but the fact that he pulled in a normal wage from both sites (6d per day at each) is evidence of his desirability.

John Jr. was the third Russell employed at York Place. He also simultaneously took part in the last several weeks of the Savoy's main construction phase – he was an apprentice at both sites, earning 4d per day at each. Given that the wage ceiling for senior carpenters usually halted at 8d per day until one could break through into the rarefied realm of salaried design master, John Jr.'s double paycheck was unusual indeed. Once again, family connections would have helped him, as his father headed the York Place project, and his future father-in-law the Savoy workshop.<sup>61</sup>

It is unfortunate that we know relatively few details of Wolsey's York Place. Though building continued on until the cardinal's fall from favor in 1529, there is a significant lacuna in the records between 1515 (when rebuilding began) and 1530 (when Henry VIII began to remake York Place into Whitehall Palace.) Simon Thurley's detailed study of the site, however, has been able to provide some glimpse of the site during the Wolsey years.<sup>62</sup> Wolsey renovated with vim, adding to his archiepiscopal town house an elaborate privy kitchen, a sizeable wine cellar, an enlarged hall, and a fashionable new gallery, not to speak of paneling the rooms throughout with wainscot and decorating the ceilings with gilded battens. The Russell craftsmen were certainly involved with this fantastical interior woodwork. John Jr. was also credited with creating "antyke heddes" for the

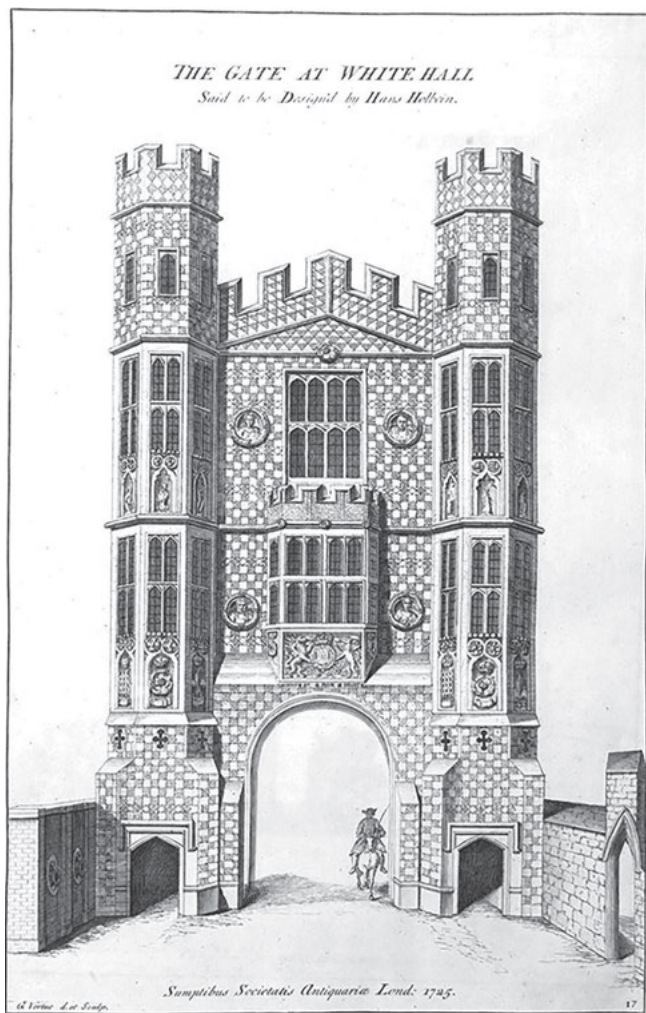
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<sup>59</sup> Although his name appears as 'Ric' in the York Place records there is little doubt that it is the same man. Richard Russell was also the master carpenter there at King's College, where he would have been working on the scaffolds for the high vault, as Harvey notes; see Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 263.

<sup>60</sup> Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 64.

<sup>61</sup> One wonders if Cooke was matchmaking to bring this talented young artisan into his family, or if the ambitious young man courted his superior's daughter. Either way, John Jr. was clearly an excellent fit.

<sup>62</sup> Simon Thurley, *Whitehall Palace* (see note 5).



**Fig. 14:** The “Holbein” gate of Whitehall palace, decorated with flint checkerwork and antique heads. [Engraving from George Vertue, *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. 1 (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1747)].

King’s Gate (Fig. 14), whose decorative white-and-black checkered flintwork was so characteristic of this palace.<sup>63</sup>

By the time Henry VIII bullied his disgraced minister Wolsey into giving up this fashionable property, John Jr. had risen to be warden of the carpenters at a

<sup>63</sup> WAM 12257, as cited in Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 262, n. 6.

wage of 5s a week.<sup>64</sup> Like most of Wolsey's workforce, John was retained by the king; indeed, his promotion to King's Master Carpenter came shortly thereafter, in 1532. While holding this co-appointment with William Clement he undertook commissions at several of the king's residences, including Otford and (intermittently) Greenwich palace in Kent.<sup>65</sup> Later he was employed at Hatfield in Hertfordshire, and the Poor Knights' Lodging at Windsor Castle in Surrey.<sup>66</sup> He also continued to work for Westminster Abbey, renovating at their behest the chancel of Aldenham church, Hertfordshire, in 1538–39. By this point he had moved from Westminster to St. Martin-in-the-Fields, his father-in-law's neighborhood. John became a churchwarden and generous donor to his new parish, as well as a wealthy man, thanks both to the property he inherited from Cooke and also his own lucrative career. His wealth seems to have prompted his children's removal both from Westminster and the building trade; his son Francis described himself as "of Paddington, gentleman" in his will (see Table 1).<sup>67</sup>

Though many details of these artisans' careers are now lost to us, we can trace the involvement of the Russell men through a series of prestige projects over the years, although details of the careers some of the younger generation in particular remain obscure (see Table 1).<sup>68</sup> Some of their work is specifically noted as scaffold making; in other projects, their role as scaffold experts can be deduced. Throughout John Russell Jr.'s career he had made a name for himself far beyond

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**64** Great Britain, Public Record Office, and J. S. Brewer, ed., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, Preserved in the Public Record Office, the British Museum and Elsewhere in England*. Arranged and Catalogued by J. S. Brewer (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1852), vol. 5, 952, as cited in Harvey *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 262, n. 5.

**65** For Otford, see Harvey *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 262; for John Russell's brief tenure as master carpenter at Greenwich with William Clement in January 1533 and again in January 1534, see MSS Rawlinson D 775 and 776, Bodleian libraries, Oxford. John Jr. also appears as master carpenter without Clement in the Greenwich April 1533 and April 1534 accounts. A 'Ric Russell' whose family ties are unexplained but who was obviously of John Jr.'s generation is also employed at Greenwich in November–December 1533 at 7d per day (see Table 1); MS Rawlinson D 776, Bodleian libraries, Oxford.

**66** Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects* (see note 8), 262; however, the note that Russell was employed at Hampton Court is incorrect.

**67** Ransome, "Artisan Dynasties" (see note 8), 243.

**68** Neither Ric Jr. nor John III appear in Harvey's or Ransome's study, but given their rates of pay and the dates of their appearance (respectively Greenwich, 1533, and Dartford, 1541, both at 6d per day) these mentions cannot correspond to Richard Sr. (who died in 1517) nor John Jr., who was far too advanced in his career in 1541 to take on "imbowering" work (rough furniture making) as part of a team making a standard wage. See MS Rawlinson D 776 and Top Kent C14, Bodleian libraries, Oxford.

scaffolding. But his early training, and especially that of his father and other relatives, still owed much to this less-glamorous but important skill.<sup>69</sup> It was likely Richard Russell's abilities, including his scaffolding experience, which allowed the Russell family carpenters not just an opportunity to travel from site to site, but provided them an entrée into the upper echelons of the prestigious projects of their era. Richard Russell's travelling from site to site, and providing expertise for a key building technique as he went, was one of the important ingredients in establishing this family's early success.

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<sup>69</sup> It is noteworthy that during one of John Jr.'s brief appearances at Greenwich (in January 1534) the carpenters were occupied in "framing the frames for the scaffold to be set up in the hall for the king's banquet there upon Twelfth Night and in setting up and taking down of the same," MS Rawlinson D 776, fol. 35.



Thomas Willard

# Travels with Johann Reuchlin: Linguist, Lawyer, and Christian Cabalist

## Introduction

The greatest Christian Hebraist of his time, Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522) traveled extensively in courtly, scholarly, and religious circles. When a first edition of his most famous book, *De Arte Cabalistica* (1517), went on sale (for US \$15,000), the booksellers' notice stated, "He used his extensive travels to make contacts with other humanists and other [sic: read "with"] Jews and to acquire manuscripts and printed books for his library, one of the most substantial of its time."<sup>1</sup> Reuchlin held teaching positions at several universities, but never stayed long because an invitation or the need to travel always took precedence. Unlike his younger friend Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), he thought that even the biblical languages – Hebrew, Greek, and (thanks to a single verse in one gospel<sup>2</sup>) Latin – were best learned from people who still spoke them.<sup>3</sup>

This study offers a brief overview of Reuchlin's life, emphasizing his diplomatic travels in Italy and his personal travels within Germany after his Jewish studies were challenged by Church authorities. It also discusses the influence of

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1 Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America, "*De Arte Cabalistica Libri Tres*," <http://www.abaa.org/book/273263665> (last consulted on Jan. 10, 2018). For a partial reconstruction of influential books in Reuchlin's library, based on his correspondence, see Cis van Heerum, *Philosophia Symbolica: Johann Reuchlin and the Kabbalah* (Amsterdam: Bibliotheca Philosophia Hermetica, 2005), 75–80.

2 John 19:20.

3 Reuchlin's position (which linguists now call the Reuchlinian) is articulated in a dialogue written by Erasmus, who held the opposing (Erasmian) view, in *De Recte Latini Graecique Sermonis Pronuntiatione* (Basel: Frobenius, 1528). Reuchlin thought the pronunciation of ancient languages was best learned from modern speakers of the language, while Erasmus thought it could better be mastered by close study of manuscripts. Although the Reuchlinian method of pronouncing classical Greek words is still used in places where modern Greek is spoken, the Erasmian or "restored" pronunciation of classical (but not biblical) words is favored in most places today. For a recent appreciation of the principles in *De Recte Latini Graecique Sermonis Pronuntiatione*, see Matthew Dillon, "The Erasmian Pronunciation of Ancient Greek: A New Perspective," *The Classical World* 94.4 (Summer 2001): 323–34.

people he met on those travels. It then turns to his famous book “On the Cabalistic Art” to show how his knowledge of languages and cultures shaped the book’s remarkably tolerant dialogue among the representatives of different religious and philosophical traditions – each of them a traveler.

## Reuchlin’s Life and Travels

Born in Pforzheim, in Germany’s Black Forest region near Tübingen, Reuchlin matriculated in the University of Freiburg im Breisgau in 1470, but returned to Pforzheim to enter the household of Charles I, the Margrave of Baden-Baden, and to become the tutor of his youngest son, Frederick. In 1473, the tutor and student attended the University of Paris, but they parted ways after a year. Frederick was intended for a career in the Church, while Reuchlin hoped to find one in academia. In 1474, Reuchlin matriculated in the University of Basel, where he worked as a Latin tutor and began work on what became a very successful Latin dictionary.<sup>4</sup> He made good progress, earning a bachelor’s degree in 1475 and a master’s degree in 1477, while studying Greek under the famed teacher Johannes Argyropoulos (1415–1487) and becoming a friend of another gifted Latinist and writer, Sebastian Brant (1457–1521). In 1478 he returned to Paris to study Greek, and the nuances of Greek manuscripts, with the Sorbonne’s first professor of Greek, George Hermonymus of Sparta, who later taught Erasmus. When the matter of a “real” job presented itself, Reuchlin studied law in Orléans first and then in Poitiers, where he earned a degree in 1481. He then took up residence at the new university in Tübingen, but left at once to travel in Italy as the translator for the university’s founder, the monolingual Eberhard I, Duke of Württemberg (1445–1496).<sup>5</sup>

Reuchlin made several diplomatic visits to Italy between 1482 and 1498. On each trip he made friends with whom he later corresponded and from whom he

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<sup>4</sup> Johann Reuchlin, *Vocabularius Breviloquus* (Basel: Johannes Amerbach, 1478). The book was frequently reprinted in the fifteenth century, often with additions; see, e.g., Johann Reuchlin, Guarino Veronese, and Johannes de Lapide, *Vocabularius Breviloquus cum Arte Diphthongandi, Punctandi, Accentuandi* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1494).

<sup>5</sup> The now-standard account of Reuchlin’s life, and the principal source for this section of the chapter, is Franz Possett, *Johann Reuchlin (1455–1622): A Theological Biography*. Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte, 129 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015). For a brief but useful biography, see Joseph Dan, “Johannes Reuchlin,” *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, ed. Wouter Hanegraaff et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), last consulted on Jan. 10, 2018). There is an excellent chronology of Reuchlin’s life and times in van Heertum, *Philosophia Symbolica* (see note 1), 94–100.

gained knowledge that filled his books.<sup>6</sup> The first Italian journey, in 1482, proved quite influential because Eberhardt's entourage stayed for some time in Florence, at the court of Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–1492). Lorenzo had studied Greek with Argyropoulos and had generously supported the Platonic Academy established (or reestablished), by his grandfather, Cosimo (1389–1464), nearly a millennium after its closure by the Emperor Justinian in 529. Cosimo was a great supporter of humanistic study and appointed Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) to head the Academy and to translate the works of Plato into Latin. (Ficino had also studied with Argyropoulos.) At the Academy, in the Villa Carregi, Reuchlin was exposed to the ideals of Italian Humanism, which he was among the first to bring north of the Alps.<sup>7</sup> Chief among these ideals, for Reuchlin, was that of friendly dialogue, exhibited in Plato's *Symposium*, which was read annually at the Academy, and in Reuchlin's two books on Cabala. Eberhardt's party continued on to Rome, where they met Pope Sixtus IV, who had granted permission for the founding of the University of Tübingen.

It was only on Reuchlin's second Italian journey, in 1490, that he met the young prodigy Count Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), who had only arrived in Florence in 1484 and had enjoyed the support of Lorenzo de' Medici ever since.<sup>8</sup> Pico was the first member of the Platonic Academy to have studied Hebrew and Hebrew mysticism. From his principal tutor in Hebrew, Flavius Mithridates (fl. 1486) he had commissioned thousands of pages of Latin translations of Cabalistic texts.<sup>9</sup> He regarded Jewish thought about Cabala as the highest form of philosophy and religion, and indeed of magic, and the missing piece in the grand synthesis of Western thought that he hoped to effect. In 1486, he had composed nine hundred theses (*conclusiones*) on all aspects of religious and philosophical thought – theses that he was prepared to defend in public disputation at or near the Vatican. He had submitted them for ecclesiastical review and had revised or replaced several, but even then the public event was prevented by religious authorities.

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6 There are two major editions of Reuchlin's correspondence, of which the later and more complete is Johann Reuchlin, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Matthias Dall'Asta and Gerald Dörner, 4 vols. (Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1999–2013).

7 See the trip report in Johannes Reuchlin, *Briefwechsel* (see note 6), vol. 1, 124–26.

8 Reuchlin's acquaintance with Pico was limited largely to the reading of his published work. He wrote to Pico's nephew Gianfrancesco in 1505; see Reuchlin, *Briefwechsel* (see note 6), vol. 1, 411–15.

9 S. A. Farmer, *Syncretism in the West: Pico's 900 Theses (1486): The Evolution of Traditional Religious and Philosophical Systems, With Texts, Translations, and a Commentary*. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 167 (Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998), 11. Pico wrote "Cabala" where Hebrew scholars prefer "Kabbalah," and Reuchlin followed Pico's spelling. I too write "Cabala" because I am discussing a largely Christian variant of the subject.

Pico's published theses included 402 summarizing the views of "others", representing the various "nations" and "sects." These included the Latins, especially the Church fathers; the Arabs, both Middle Eastern and Spanish; the Peripatetics or Aristotelians; and the Platonists as well as Pythagoreans, Chaldeans, Hermetists, and Cabalists. The remaining 498 theses were made "after his own opinion" ("secundum propriam opinionem"). Despite Pico's affiliation with Ficino and the Platonic Academy, the Cabalists had pride of place, getting the last forty-seven opinions of others, and the last seventy-two opinions of his own.<sup>10</sup> This last group of theses was said to confirm the Christian religion, and it had two subsets that proved very important to Reuchlin. For his purposes, Pico divided Cabala into the study of names and numbers (theses 1–2). The Cabalistic study of names, and specifically the names of God, supports the claim of Saint Paul that Jesus is the name at which every knee should bow (theses 6–8; Philippians 2:10). Meanwhile, the Cabalistic study of numbers, associated especially with the emanations from God (Hebrew *sephiroth*), agrees "miraculously" ("mirabiliter") with the numerology of Pythagoras (thesis 55). Reuchlin drew on the theses concerning names in his first book on Cabala, and on those concerning numbers in his second. But he had first to strengthen his knowledge of Hebrew.

Four years earlier, he had learned the alphabet from a Jew known only as "Calman."<sup>11</sup> He now had an introduction to Pico's Jewish tutor, with whom he is thought to have studied in person and perhaps by correspondence. In 1492, he met his most important Hebrew teacher, Jacob ben Jahlil Loans (d. 1506),<sup>12</sup> the personal physician to Maximilian I (1459–1519), whose coronation as king Reuchlin had attended in 1486 and who became the Holy Roman Emperor in 1493. Then, in 1496, he visited the famed library of Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516) at Sponheim, where he found many Cabalistic texts. Ten years later, in 1506, he published a Latin lexicon and grammar of Hebrew,<sup>13</sup> establishing himself as the

<sup>10</sup> For useful tables of reference, see Farmer, *Syncretism in the West* (see note 9), 204–07.

<sup>11</sup> Van Heertum, *Philosophia Symbolica* (see note 1), 96.

<sup>12</sup> On Reuchlin's relations with Loans, see Reuchlin, *Briefwechsel* (see note 6), vol. 1, 338–39. Also see Theodor Dunkelgrün, "The Humanist Discovery of Hebrew Epistolography," *Jewish Books and Their Readers: Aspects of the Intellectual Life of Christians and Jews in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Scott Mandelbrote. Brill's Series in Church History, 75 (Leiden and Boston: Brill Publishing, 2016), 211–59, esp. 213–17. Reuchlin speaks highly of Loans in *De Rudimentis Hebraicis* (Pforzheim: Thomas Anshelm, 1506).

<sup>13</sup> Johann Reuchlin, *De Rudimentis Hebraicis* (see note 12). The book is often, though incorrectly, called the first Latin grammar of Hebrew. Reuchlin's younger assistant Konrad Pellikan (1478–1576) had already published a rudimentary introduction to Hebrew: *De Modo Legendi et Intelligendi Haebrarum* (Strasbourg: Grüninger, 1504). Both books were indebted to a manuscript grammar by the medieval scholar, Moses Kimri, which Reuchlin had obtained on his travels.

chief authority in a new field of study for Christians. He had already published his first book on Cabala,<sup>14</sup> to be discussed later.

By 1506, however, Reuchlin's circumstances were somewhat unsettled. Duke Eberhardt had died in 1496, leaving rival factions in the duchy of Württemberg, where he had been the first duke. Reuchlin spent three years in exile from Eberhardt's seat of power in Stuttgart. After visiting Sponheim, he went to Heidelberg, as advisor to Philipp, the Elector Palatine of the Rhine (1448–1508), and tutor to Philipp's sons. In Heidelberg, he won the support of Johann von Dalberg (1445–1503), to whom he dedicated his first book on Cabala. Van Dalberg had been the university's first professor of Greek before he left to become Bishop of Worms. Reuchlin hoped to lecture on Greek or Hebrew; however, his main contribution to the university was to write several Latin plays for students to perform in the humanist tradition.<sup>15</sup> His play *Nemmo* ("Nobody"), a Latin reworking of a French comedy including musical choruses,<sup>16</sup> was published with a commendatory poem by his old friend Sebastian Brant.<sup>17</sup>

In 1498, Reuchlin made his third and final journey to Italy, this time on behalf of the Elector Palatine, Philip the Upright (1448–1508). He made a formal address to the Pope on the Elector's behalf.<sup>18</sup> While in Rome he inquired about learned Jews and was advised to seek out Obadiah ben Jacob Sforza from Cesena (ca. 1475–1550), with whom he spoke mainly about non-biblical literature in

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**14** Johann Reuchlin, *De Verbo Mirifico* (Basel: Johann Amerbach, 1494). For a useful discussion of this book's significance, see Nicholas Goodrick Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 49–50.

**15** Eckehard Catholy, *Das deutsche Lustspiel: Vom Mittelalter bis zum Ende der Barockzeit* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1969), 94–112; also see Cora Diehl, "Neo-Latin Humanist and Protestant Drama in Germany," *Neo-Latin Drama and Theater in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 103–83; here 123–29. At least one of Reuchlin's two Latin plays was first performed in Dalberg's house.

**16** See G. Ehrstein, "Scaenica Faceta: The Choral Odes of Johannes Reuchlin's *Scaenica Progyrnasmata* (1497)," *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Bariensis: Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies*, ed. Rhoda Schnur. Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 184 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University Press, 1998), 235–41.

**17** Johann Reuchlin, *Scenica Progyrnasmata* (Basel: Johann Bergmann, 1498). Included in some editions of Sebastian Brant, *Varia Carmina* (Basel: Johann Bergmann, 1498), extra signatures A1r–B3r. The University of Arizona's copy of Brant's poems does not include the extra sheets; however, they are in the copy at the Bavarian State Library in Munich. See <https://bildsuche.digitale-sammlungen.de/index.html?c=viewer&lv=1&bandnummer=bsb00025678&pimage=00109&suchbegriff=&l=en> (last consulted on Jan. 10, 2018).

**18** Johann Reuchlin, *Oratio ad Alexandrum VI. pro Philippo Bavariae* (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1498). Reuchlin met Adus that year and returned with many Aldine books. His personal library at the time was said to include thirty-two editions from the Aldine press in Venice. See van Heertum, *Philosophia Symbolica* (see note 1), 21.

Hebrew. Returning to Stuttgart after the death of Eberhardt's chief rival and successor, he was elected to a high position in the Swabian League, which had lost its peacekeeping power after the death of Eberhardt. He gained judicial experience as one of the league's three judges. He buried his first wife and married for a second time. When plague reached Stuttgart, he and his new wife took refuge at the abbey in Denkendorf, where he wrote a book on the art of preaching that was based on principles of Latin rhetoric.<sup>19</sup> This was followed by the Hebrew dictionary and grammar, which became the principal teaching text for Christian students of the Hebrew Scriptures. At the same time he wrote a book suggesting why Jews had been in a condition of misery for so long.<sup>20</sup>

It was Reuchlin's experience with Hebrew that drew him into what became known as "the Reuchlin affair."

## Reuchlin's Trials and Tribulation

In 1507, a converted Jew named Johannes Pfefferkorn (1469–1529) began issuing a series of anti-Semitic pamphlets. A former baker and convicted thief, Pfefferkorn experienced a prison conversion and, once released, became the assistant to Jacob von Hoogstraaten (1560–1527), the prior of the Dominican house in Cologne and Inquisitor General for the Church in the archbishoprics Cologne, Mainz, and Trier. Pfefferkorn's leading theme was that Jewish books contained libel against Christ and Christianity – libel that prevented Jews from accepting the true faith and, presumably, abandoning the practice of usury, or lending money at interest. In 1509, he approached Maximilian I through the king's sister, and persuaded him to permit the confiscation and destruction of libelous Jewish books, which he defined broadly as anything but the Old Testament. Once given permission, he proceeded to Frankfurt and confiscated 430 books in a single month. The Jewish community in Frankfurt appealed to Maximilian, who then instructed the Bishop of Mainz to form a commission that could advise him on the matter. He also asked the bishop to include Reuchlin, who could actually read Hebrew (Pfefferkorn could not, and very few Christians had the slightest idea of what was contained in the Talmud, against which he had railed). It is

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<sup>19</sup> Johann Reuchlin, *Liber Congestorum de Arte Praedicandi* (Pforzheim: Thomas Anshelm, 1508); first published in 1504.

<sup>20</sup> Johann Reuchlin, *Tütsch missiue, warumb die Juden so lang im ellend sind* (Pforzheim: Thomas Anshelm, 1505). For discussion of the book and the Reuchlin affair, see Norbert Flöken, *Der Streit um die Bücher der Juden (1505–1521): Ein Lesebuch*. Elektronische Schriftenreihe der Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek, 9 (Cologne: Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln, 2014).

unclear whether the commissioners ever met in person or whether Reuchlin joined them. The other commissioners decided to let the practice continue, but Reuchlin's "expert opinion" ("Gutachten") offered a stunning contradiction. It said in effect, don't burn what you can't read and understand. Based on the careful arguments leading up to this conclusion, the bishop decided to stop the practice of confiscating Jewish books.

The disappointed Pfefferkorn – perhaps with the guidance of his mentor Hoogstraaten, who had also served on the commission – produced a follow-up book that accused Reuchlin of accepting a bribe from the Jews of Frankfurt.<sup>21</sup> Reuchlin responded with a book which has been called "a classic treatise against anti-Semitism."<sup>22</sup> Playing on Pfefferkorn's title, *Handspiegel* ("Hand Mirror"), Reuchlin called his book *Augenspiegel* ("Eye Glasses"). The title page showed a pince-nez, as if to tell his accuser, "If you actually read these books before you condemned them, you should have your eyes examined." (See Fig. 1.) The little book is a masterpiece of jurisprudence, which maintained, in the words of a modern translator, that Christianity and Judaism must be considered "two parallel versions of the truth."<sup>23</sup> Reuchlin concluded:

From the two aforementioned articles of law, the "Clementine" and the "Distinction of the Decree", we may derive the conclusive judgment in this entire matter, namely: That we should not burn the Jews' books, and that through logical discourse, we should convince them with gentle persuasion and kindness and with God's help to accept our Faith.<sup>24</sup>

Reuchlin conceded that a very few books, like the Jewish life of Jesus,<sup>25</sup> were indeed contrary to Christian teachings and could justly be seized. Even then, he wrote more as a humanist scholar than a theologian, let alone a heresiologist. He thought Jewish books as precious as Jewish children, and as deserving of life. He was in an impossible position, and some think that Maximilian meant to put him

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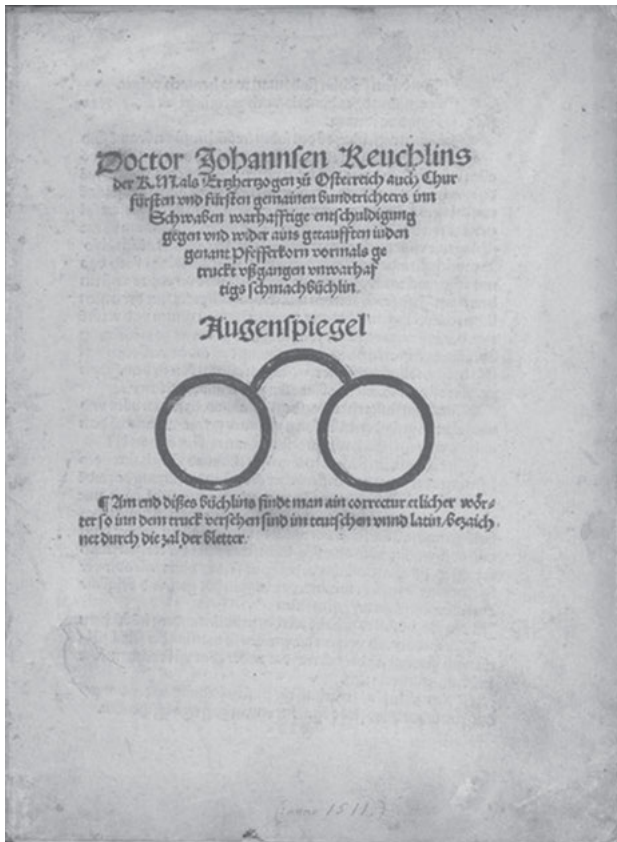
<sup>21</sup> Johannes Pfefferkorn, *Handt Spiegel ... wider und gegen die Jüden / und judischen thalmudischen Schrifften* (Mainz: Schöffer, 1511).

<sup>22</sup> Johann Reuchlin, *Recommendation whether to Confiscate, Destroy, and Burn All Jewish Books: A Classic Treatise against Anti-Semitism*, trans. Peter Wortsman. Studies in Judaism and Christianity (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000); originally published as *[W]arhafftige entschuldigung gegen vnd wider ains getaufften iuden genant Pfefferkorn vormals getruckt vßgangen vnwarhafftigs schmachbüchlin Augenspiegel* (Tübingen: Th[omas] Anshelm, 1511).

<sup>23</sup> Peter Wortsman, "Foreword," Reuchlin, *Recommendation whether to Confiscate, Destroy, and Burn All Jewish Books* (see note 22), 1–14; here 5.

<sup>24</sup> Reuchlin, *Recommendation whether to Confiscate, Destroy, and Burn All Jewish Books* (see note 22), 87.

<sup>25</sup> According to the Hebrews: *A New Translation of the Jewish Life of Jesus (the "Toldoth Jeshu")*, with an Inquiry into its Sources and Special Relationship to the Lost Gospel according to the Hebrews, ed. and trans. Hugh J. Schonfield (London: Duckworth, 1937).



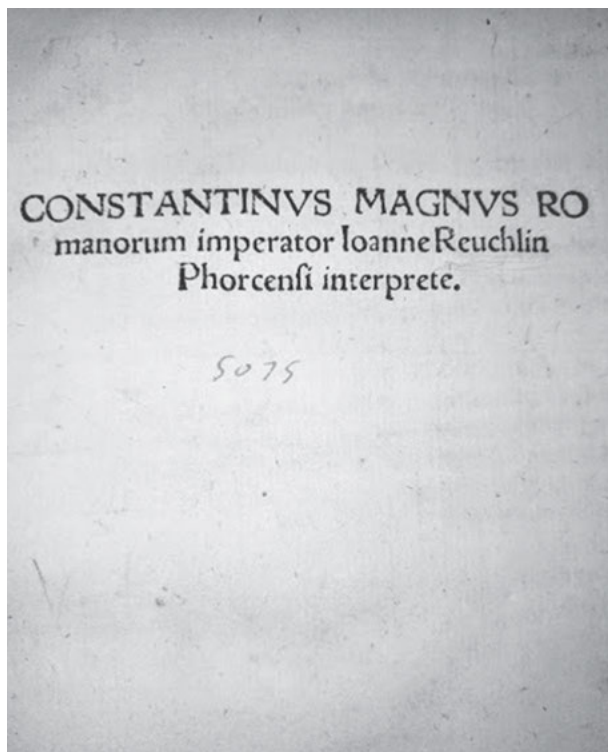
**Fig. 1:** Title page of Reuchlin's *Augenspiegel* (1511), showing a pince-nez such as a presbyopic reader might need. From the facsimile edition prepared by Josef Benzing (Munich: Froben, 1961). Courtesy of the University of Arizona Library's Special Collections.

there. They suggest that Maximilian intended all along to discontinue the confiscation of Jewish books, but he also banned the sale of Reuchlin's *Augenspiegel*.

In 1514, the Dominicans of Cologne appealed to the Bishops of Mainz, Speyer, and Trier, arguing that the *Augenspiegel* was a heretical book and that the author should be tried as a heretic. The Dominicans solicited opinions from theologians in Paris and elsewhere. Reuchlin wrote a "defense against his calumniators from Cologne."<sup>26</sup> He even delivered a personal copy to Maximilian, along with his Latin

<sup>26</sup> Johann Reuchlin, *Defensio contra Calumniatores suos Colonienses* (Tübingen: Thomas Anshelm, 1512).





**Fig. 2:** Title page of Reuchlin's Latin translation of a Greek biography of Constantine (1513). Courtesy of the University of Arizona Library's Special Collections.

translation of a historical text he dedicated to the king.<sup>27</sup> (See Fig. 2.) His defense was simple: as a good Catholic layman, he was prepared to take instruction in matters of faith; but as a lawyer and scholar, he would not change his opinion. The Bishop of Mainz found in Reuchlin's favor, as did the other two bishops in separate trials. The Dominicans were required to pay all court expenses, but they proceeded to burn any copies of the *Augenspiegel* that they could obtain. (Singed pages of the book are preserved in the Reuchlin museum in Pforzheim.) Then they appealed the ecclesiastical decisions in Germany to the papal court in Rome.

Reuchlin did not travel to Rome to defend himself. He does not seem to have gone to all the hearings in Germany, and could have used his responsibilities as a judge in Stuttgart during still unsettled times as a reason to stay away. Instead,

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<sup>27</sup> *Constantinus Magnus Romanorum Imperator*, trans. Johann Reuchlin (Tübingen: Thomas Anshelm, 1513).

he solicited what would now be called letters of reference; he had them published by his regular publisher, as “letters of bright men”<sup>28</sup>; and he sent copies to Rome. Some men, like Erasmus, declined to contribute, but wrote directly to people they knew in Rome.<sup>29</sup> The papal commission found in Reuchlin’s favor in 1515; however, the Pope closed it down before the decision could be promulgated, saying that he wanted to consider the matter himself. He said nothing during the next five years. Reuchlin’s friends produced two volumes of “letters of obscure men,” playing on the title of the “letters of bright men” that Reuchlin had collected.<sup>30</sup> The first volume printed letters by humanists who supported Reuchlin; the second volume, written in crabbed medieval Latin, pretended to support Hoogstraaten and the Dominicans of Cologne while making merciless fun of their old-fashioned thought and behavior. Even Reuchlin joined in the fun.

## Reuchlin’s Masterpiece

In 1516, Reuchlin completed what is generally considered his masterpiece. His book on “the Cabalistic art” (*De Arte Cabalisticae*) was licensed to be printed on April 21, 1516, with a copyright good for the next five years. It was actually printed in March 1517.<sup>31</sup> Reuchlin dedicated the book to Pope Leo X (1475–1521; ruled 1513–1521). Born Giovanni di Lorenzo de’ Medici, the pope was the youngest son of Lorenzo il Magnifico, aged seven when Reuchlin first visited the family compound and only seventeen when his father died. In the dedication, Reuchlin reminded Leo that his father had brought the wisdom of the ages to Florence, promoting the studies of Ficino and others. He added proudly that he had browsed admiringly in the Laurentian library and now planned to complete it by offering “Pythagoras reborn” (“renascentem Pythagoram”) in the light of Cabala, which

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**28** Johann Reuchlin, *Clarorum Virorum Epistolae* (Tübingen: Thomas Anshelm, 1514).

**29** Cornelius Augustijn, *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, trans. J. C. Grayson (1986; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 11–12.

**30** Johann Crutius Rubeanus and Ulrich von Hutten (attrib.), *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, 2 vols. ([Mainz]: n.p., 1515–1517).

**31** Johann Reuchlin, *De Arte Cabalistica* (Hagenau: Thomas Anshelm, 1517), folio 80r. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations in this article are taken from the bilingual, Latin-English, edition prepared by Martin and Sarah Goodman (New York: Abaris Books, 1983), hereafter abbreviated *DAC*. Folio numbers in the 1517 edition are given first, followed by page numbers assigned to the Latin and English texts in the 1983 edition.

he called “symbolic philosophy” (“*philosophia symbolica*”).<sup>32</sup> Reuchlin himself would become known as Pythagoras reborn.<sup>33</sup>

Composition of the book can be dated to the year 1515, for its central character is a learned Jew from Andalusia, who was exiled twenty-three years earlier, i.e., in 1492, when King Ferdinand expelled the Jews of Spain.<sup>34</sup> Reuchlin breaks off the dedication to introduce his characters and setting, but he concludes it at the book’s end. He writes that the pope can now see what the ancients thought of Pythagoras and the Cabalists. He insists that he is “a man of only ordinary intelligence and limited wisdom” (“*mediocriis ingenii & minutae prudentiae homo*”) and therefore submits his work to the pope’s authority. He refers to the “five-year war” that his enemies have waged against him, and to a parcel he knows to have been delivered from Cologne on September 18, 1515. He hopes to receive the pope’s pardon, if not indeed his thanks for his gift to the Church of “the art and study of the Hebrew language” (“*artem & studia sermonis Hebraici*”).<sup>35</sup>

In these concluding remarks, Reuchlin refers to his labors over seven months, presumably between the late summer of 1515 and the late winter of 1616. His voice also appears during two breaks in the dialogue, during which his interlocutors get some much needed rest. In the second interjection, he states that news has just arrived from Rome “that the trumped up ban imposed on Johann Reuchlin by Astarotus has been lifted.”<sup>36</sup> Astarotus is an obvious blind for Hoogstraaten, who is said to have brought his charges three years earlier. The name is a variant of the Old Testament name of a pagan place, Astaroth (Deuteronomy 1:4), itself a variant of Ishtar. In medieval grimoires such as Reuchlin could have examined at the library in Sponheim, Astaroth is the Duke of Hell, to be conjured at one’s own risk. Reuchlin takes considerable risk himself in speaking thus about his enemy, whom he knew to have the pope’s ear, and we shall see what happened. Meanwhile, we must examine the plan of his *opus magnum*.

Like his earlier book on the wonder-working name, the book on Cabalistic art is presented as a dialogue with three speakers. However, the relations between the speakers is quite different. In the earlier book, three men walk into an unidentified space, which might as well be the bar in a contemporary joke. The first man is named Sidonius, which identifies him to students of philosophy as a disciple of Epicurius and therefore a pagan. The second is named Baruchius, which identifies

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<sup>32</sup> DAC, B8v; 38–39.

<sup>33</sup> Lewis W. Spitz, “Reuchlin–Pythagoras Reborn,” *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 61–80.

<sup>34</sup> DAC, B1v; 42–43.

<sup>35</sup> DAC, 79v–80r; 354–57.

<sup>36</sup> DAC, 51r; 234–35.

him to students of the Old Testament with the scribe of Jeremiah. And the third has the name Capnion, the Greek name that Reuchlin was given on his second visit to Italy. The three men discuss their different worldviews. Then Capnion performs a sort of magic trick, every bit as impressive as that of turning water into wine. In a space no larger than a napkin, he writes three names of God: the three-letter Shaddai (שֹׁדַי), the four-letter Yahweh (יהוה), and the five-letter Yeshusa (ישוע). The last is the Hebrew name for Jesus, formed by adding the letter shin of Shaddai (SHD) to the Tetragrammaton Yahweh (YHWH). Whereas the Tetragrammaton is too sacred to be pronounced, and is often replaced in the Hebrew Scriptures by the name Adonai (Lord), the name of Jesus can be publicly declared.<sup>37</sup>

With this performance, Capnion convinces Sidonius to give up gluttony for Bible study and Baruchius to stop reading the Talmud and study Cabala. Thus, in 1494, Reuchlin seems to have convinced himself, at least, that the Christianized Cabala could lead to the conversion of the Jews. The great Hebrew scholar Gershom Scholem later remarked that Reuchlin effectively combines the three ages of Jewish hermeneutics (which Scholem identified as Chaos, Torah, and Messiah) with the three ages of Christian prophecy propounded by Joachim of Flores (1135–1202): Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>38</sup> If Pico did not create Christian Cabala, but only envisioned its possibility, Reuchlin realized the dream.

Reuchlin's second book on Cabala is quite different. First of all, it is very specific about the characters in the dialogue, the places where they meet, and the time frame within which they converse. Second, there is no conversion. The three speakers simply gain respect for one another. If anyone is to be converted, it is Reuchlin's first intended reader, Pope Leo X, and the conversion is from a medieval view of theology based solely on the Latin translation of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, the *Biblia Vulgata* of Saint Jerome (327–420), to a more open view accommodating the nuances of the original languages.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Philippians 2:10. For the possible influence of Nicolas Cusanus on Reuchlin's treatment of divine names; see Spitz, "Reuchlin – Pythagoras Reborn" (see note 33), 68.

<sup>38</sup> Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1974), 198.

<sup>39</sup> Reuchlin's trials under the Inquisitor Hoogstraaten anticipated the more rigorous trials of Fray Luis de León, who was imprisoned by Dominican Inquisitors in Spain for nearly five years. See Colin P. Thompson, *The Strife of Tongues: Fray Luis de León and the Golden Age of Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Also see J. Michael Fulton, "Confusion and Controversy in Spain During the Paradigm Shift of the Protestant Reformation: The Relationship between Printing, the Council of Trent, and the Inquisitorial Trial of Fray Luis de León (1527–1591)," *Paradigm Shifts in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, ? (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming); cf. also Fulton's contribution to the present volume.

The dialogue begins when two men meet in the restaurant of an inn at Frankfurt. From their speech, they recognize each other as men of learning. The first identifies himself as Maurranus. His name identifies him as a Muslim, or former Muslim, and he says he has traveled from Constantinople, where he teaches Arabic philosophy. The second calls himself Philolaus, the name of an early disciple of Pythagoras. He has come from the Caucasus and belongs to the Alani tribe, which like the better known Khazars, has been exposed to all three Abrahamic religions but has not fully embraced any of them. He thinks of himself as a Pythagorean and has come to Frankfurt to speak to a learned Jew named Simon. He has heard (what Reuchlin heard from Pico) that the numerology of Pythagoras probably came from the Jews. For example, the Pythagorean Tetrakys (the ten points arranged in lines with one, two, three, and four points) corresponded to the ten emanations on the Cabalistic Tree of Life (see Fig. 3). Maurranus wants to tag along and listen in, and he turns out to contribute to the conversation by interrupting the over-hasty Philolaus, and let Simon have his say.

The two men visit Simon's house that very afternoon and find him walking in his garden. The visitors introduce themselves and say that they hope he will explain "the philosophical method of Cabala" ("Cabalistica ratione"), which scholars as far away as Scythia and Thrace regard as "something to be sought after and cultivated" ("colenda & expectenda").<sup>40</sup> Simon says he considers Cabala a "contemplative art" ("contemplandi ars") given by God as a gift to thinkers and leading serious inquirers to what the Greeks called *telos*, an end that for Jews was the bliss of knowing.<sup>41</sup>

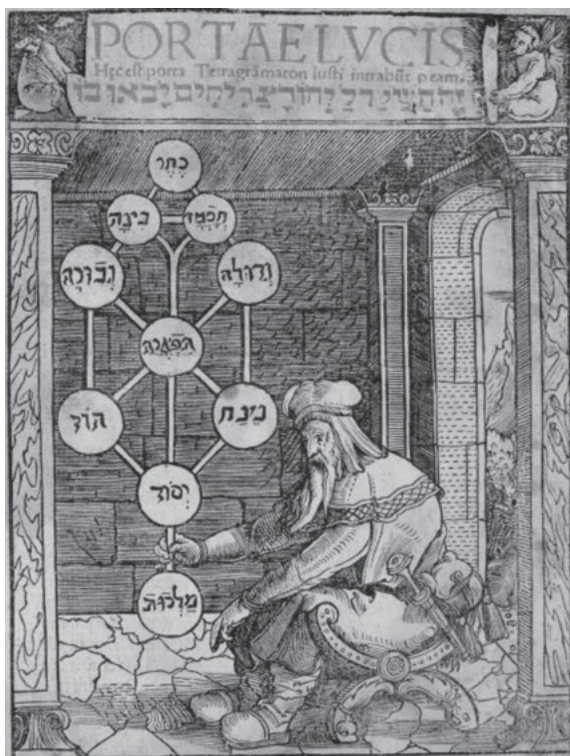
What follows is a dialogue set over a single weekend, from Friday afternoon to Sunday evening. On Saturday, when Simon is observing the Sabbath, Philolaus and Marranus reflect on what they have learned from him and how it connects to the knowledge they brought with them. This gives Philolaus the opportunity to clarify what he understands the true Pythagoreanism to be, responding to traditional complaints brought against it. Even here the discussion is highly irenic. The interlocutors seldom disagree, and interrupt each other mainly to provide supporting details from their different backgrounds. Meanwhile, the dialogue allows each to answer objections that could be brought against his personal persuasion. For example, Philolaus denies that Pythagoreans believed human souls could pass into animals, saying that talk about metempsychosis was metaphorical,<sup>42</sup> as

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<sup>40</sup> DAC, 1v; 42–43. Philolaus says he heard about Simon from Jews expelled from Spain twenty-three years earlier. This detail dates the dialogue itself, and probably the beginning of its composition, to the year 1615.

<sup>41</sup> Luke 14:32; DAC, unnumbered, 2r; 39, 45.

<sup>42</sup> DAC, 33r–34v; 169–75.



**Fig. 3:** The Cabalistic Tree of Life. From Johann Pistorius, *De Arte Cabalistica* (1587). Courtesy of the University of Arizona Library's Special Collections.

when Jesus calls Herod a fox or when Numenius refers to Plato as Moses speaking Attic Greek.<sup>43</sup> Each of the three interlocutors is familiar with the views of Christianity, and the ecumenical Reuchlin implies that their views are not contrary to those of Catholic Christianity.

Reuchlin clearly stands outside the dialogue. He appears in three guises. We see him first and last as the appellant to Leo X. As such, he is expositing Cabalistic ideas to elucidate the “Italian philosophy,” which theologians since Augustine had traced back to Pythagoras.<sup>44</sup> Reuchlin also appears in news that the innkeeper spreads at the start of day three – news that attempts to have his *Augenspiegel* confiscated have failed in the courts and that flyers with an anticipatory order from Maximilian have been torn from the doors of public buildings.<sup>45</sup> Later that day, Simon mentions Reuchlin’s book on the miraculous Word of

<sup>43</sup> *DAC*, 34v; 174–75.

<sup>44</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, book 8.

<sup>45</sup> *DAC*, 50r; 234–35.

God.<sup>46</sup> Although Philolaus the Pythagorean may seem the closest to Reuchlin, closer than the Jew or the Arab, he becomes a figure of fun for the others, and all three have Reuchlin's famous facility with language. They all speak in Latin and quote Greek philosophers and theologians in the original language. Presumably, they all understand a certain amount of Hebrew, though only Simon speaks it and quotes its writings, biblical, Talmudic, and Cabalistic (see Fig. 4).<sup>47</sup> Some historians have seen the dialogue form as a hindrance to what might otherwise be a textbook introduction.<sup>48</sup> However, after Marranus restrains the overly eager Philolaus on day three, Simon is able to speak at length, giving readers a good sense of Reuchlin's understanding of Cabala's key doctrines.

Given Reuchlin's passion for language and for ideas conveyed in writing, it may be useful to examine a few sample passages from *De Arte Cabalistica*. Here from book 1 is a speech that Simon makes as he explains why Cabala is a contemplative art:

Haec illa est quae paulo ante a nobis uocabatur deificatio, cum ab obiecto praesente per medium suum exterior sensus transit in sensationem interiorem, & illa in imaginationem, & imaginatio in existimationem, & existimatio in rationem, & ratio in intellectum, & intellectus in mentem, & mens in lucem, quae illuminat hominem, & illuminatum in se corripit.

[This is what used to be called "deification," when exterior sense passes from the immediate object to the inner sense, and that passes to the imagination, imagination to thought, thought to reason, reason to understanding, understanding to reflection, and reflection to the light which enlightens man and clasps to itself that enlightenment.]<sup>49</sup>

This passage uses the rhetorical scheme known as climax (from Greek *klimax*, "ladder"), where each new element is a step up from the one before it. Presented simply, the argument goes:

exterior sense → interior sense  
 interior sense → imagination  
 imagination → thought  
 thought → reason  
 reason → understanding  
 understanding → reflection  
 reflection → enlightenment

<sup>46</sup> DAC, 62r; 284–85.

<sup>47</sup> Fig. 4 shows a sample page of Reuchlin's text, employing all three languages as well as marginal sigals.

<sup>48</sup> See, e.g., Spitz, "Reuchlin–Pythagoras Reborn" (see note 33), 70.

<sup>49</sup> DAC, 2v; 46–47. Galatians 4:5–7. Paul's *huiiothesia* is translated as "adoption" in the King James Bible, but is comparable to becoming "partakers of the divine nature," as promised in 2 Peter 1:4 and thus to Greek *apotheosis* or Latin *deificatio*. The original spelling of Latin quotations from this book has been retained, but abbreviations with diacritical marks have been expanded.

Here Simon shows his familiarity with the scholastic, specifically Aristotelian, teaching that physical sensation leads to imagination, thought, and mind. He returns to this point on day three, as he explains the significance of signs: “sensus moueat phantasiam, phantasia memoriam, memoria rationem, ratio intellectum, intellectus mentum, mens angelum” (“The senses stimulate the imagination, imagination memory, memory reason, reason understanding, understanding rouses mind, and mind the angel”).<sup>50</sup> Simon clearly has a longer ladder than Aristotle’s, and it is thanks to meditation that the Cabalists get beyond the visible, material world to the invisible, mental world.<sup>51</sup> Simon is clearly the oldest of the three, having been educated in Spain before Jews were expelled more than two decades earlier. He insists that the practice of Cabala is not for the young, but only for those who have grown past the passions of their youth and have become wise and good men.<sup>52</sup> Cabala, he says, requires intelligence (*ingenium*), skill (*ars*), and deep familiarity with the humanities (*humaniorum studium*).<sup>53</sup>

Reuchlin leaves the considerable details of Cabalistic practice for Simon to discuss on the third day. But when Simon is absent on the intervening day, to celebrate the Jewish Sabbath, Philolaus prepares the way by discussing the details of Pythagorean number mysticism, beginning with the Tetraktys, the triangular figure with ten dots in four rows. Toward the end of his lecture, he tells Marranus:

Pythagoricam philosophiam esse notis uerborum & tegui mentis rerum plenam, eumque tradendi morem ut ante dixit ab Hebreis credit & aegyptiis ad graecos primus transtulisse. Solebantem aegyptii quibusdam fictis iter sacerdotes literis sacra communicare, ut essent plebi secretaque & diutius admirationi forent & attentius caperent. Vude illi Colossam statuae, area, arcus, & aera publice incisa literis aegyptiorum sacris, prominebant spectanda universis, sed non nisi mystis & initiatis hieroglyphis intellecta ut de iis Chaermon & Orus, egyptiorumque multi scripsere.

[Pythagorean philosophy is full of signs for words and cloaks for things, a form of communication that he, so it is believed, was the first to take to the Greeks from the Hebrews, as I have already said, and the Egyptians. The Egyptian priests used a special alphabet to convey sacred information among themselves, so that the sacred would be kept secret from the common people; wonder would last longer and they would win greater attention. So we have the Colossi, the statues, the altars, the arches, the bronzes – all publicly inscribed with the secret Egyptian characters. They stand exposed to public gaze, comprehensible to none

<sup>50</sup> DAC, 57r; 264, 267. See Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes. Bollingen Series 51.2, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), vol. 1, 679–86; *On the Soul*, book 3, chapters 3–7.

<sup>51</sup> DAC, 16r; 100–01.

<sup>52</sup> DAC, 5v; 58–59.

<sup>53</sup> DAC, 4r; 52–53.



but priests and initiates in the hieroglyphics. All this comes from Charemon and Orus and many Egyptian writers.]<sup>54</sup>

Reuchlin wrote three centuries before Champollion began to decipher the Egyptian “hieroglyphics” (from Greek *hieroglyphikos* “sacred carving”), using the Rosetta Stone (discovered in 1799). Like others of his time, Reuchlin wrote with the understanding that the hieroglyphs preserved esoteric meaning known only to initiates. However, he had a special interest in the topic, as do the interlocutors in *De Arte Cabalistica*. He wanted to think that the relations between words and things were not simply arbitrary, as Aristotle asserted and most linguists of his time maintained.<sup>55</sup> He hoped that he could find some connections, and he looked for them mainly in the names for God in the Hebrew Scriptures. One scholar has suggested:

in the *De Arte Cabalistica* Reuchlin is advancing the debate on the efficacy of symbolic language and the manner in which one can, using symbolic language, have an effect on the sensible world. In this respect he differentiates himself sharply from many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thinkers, who believed instead – following a venerable Aristotelian line of argument – that words were arbitrarily designated signs of things that possessed meaning only by human convention. Instead, Reuchlin was creating and operating within a language system whose *raison d'être* was to transcend by ritual the closed nature of language and the boundary between words and things.<sup>56</sup>

Simon’s detailed account of divine names, elaborated on the third day, does much to establish such a “language system.”

When Simon greets Marranaus and Philolaus after his day of Sabbath rest, he asks whether they should not be observing the Christian Sabbath. Philolaus responds, rather cheekily, “We are a Pythagorean crew [*turba*] and keep every day holy for joyous meditation.”<sup>57</sup> This gives Simon the opportunity to correct the impetuous Pythagorean and discuss the importance of having an official day of rest, which

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<sup>54</sup> DAC, 47r; 224–25. Charemon of Alexandria was an Egyptian priest and Stoic philosopher of the first century CE, who supervised the library at the Temple of Serapis. Fragments of his writings have been preserved; see Eduard Zeller, “Die Hieroglyphiker Chäremon und Horapollon,” *Hermes* 11 (1876): 430–33; reprinted in *Eduard Zellers Kleine Schriften*, ed. Otto Leuze (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 175–78. Orus is the god Horus, the tutelary spirit or genius of the sacred Egyptian places.

<sup>55</sup> Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (see note 46), vol. 1, 25–26; *On Interpretation*, chapter 2. For Reuchlin’s esoteric interests, see Charles Zika, Charles Zika, *Reuchlin und die okkulte Tradition der Renaissance*. Pforzheimer Reuchlinschriften, 6 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1998).

<sup>56</sup> Christopher S. Celenza, “The Search for Ancient Wisdom in Early Modern Europe: Reuchlin and the Late Ancient Esoteric Paradigm,” *The Journal of Religious History* 25.2 (June 2001): 115–33; here 122.

<sup>57</sup> DAC, 51r; 236–37.

is also a day for contemplation, including contemplation on the Day of Jubilee as the last Sabbath. When the discussion turns to the number seven as the key to the Sabbath, Philolaus exclaims that this confirms his hypothesis, “that Cabala is simply (to use the Pythagorean vocabulary) symbolic philosophy, where words and letters are code things, and such things are code for other things.”<sup>58</sup> Simon replies that he could not presume to teach such a complicated subject, and will only summarize what he has read in Cabalistic literature. Again he puts the Pythagorean in his place. Later in the day, as Philolaus becomes impatient with the pace of Simon’s lecture, Marranus has to shush him, so that Simon can finish what he is saying.

Simon seems to speak from mental lists. There is one God. There is endless multiplicity in God’s creation, symbolized by the number 2. There are three paths of Cabalistic study: Gematria or the mathematical calculation of values associated with the letters in a word, Notariacon or the transposition of letters in a word, and Themura or the substitution of one letter for another, including substitution of letters with equal numerical value when combined. There are ten emanations or *sephiroth* that form the Tree of Life, and twenty-two paths that connect the different emanations. There are thirty-two paths of wisdom, leading to fifty gates of knowledge, and there are seventy-two sacred names. Simon does not skimp on details. He rattles off the names of all thirty-two paths, in Hebrew with Latin translations, and he gives numerous examples of the Cabalistic paths of study. The simple statement “Ezekiel sat by the river Chobar” becomes “Ezekiel dwelt under the influence of a cherub when letters in the Hebrew root KVBR (*kaf vav bet reish* = *kevar*) are transposed to form KRVB (*keruwb*).<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, Simon does not forget what brought the gentile scholars to see him. When he concludes his grammatical “exposition,” Philolaus moans that he and his friend must “become schoolchildren [*elementarios*] under the rule[r] in old age,” while Marranus wittily suggests that will be the Pythagorean rebirth (*palengensia Pythagorica*) that his friend sought. Simon says basically, Don’t knock it (*Nolite respuere*), and continues in a speech calculated to recapture their flagging attention:

magna profecto res est et digna philosophis, si Platoni uestro creditis, minimeque ridicula, ut in Cratylo Socrati uisum erat cognoscere literas, non enim habemus quicque inquit illo melius, que de ueritate nonim iudicimus [Greek quotation followed by Latin translation] quonquidem syllabis & literis imitatio sit essentiae rectissimum est discernere elementa

<sup>58</sup> DAC, 51v; 238, 241.

<sup>59</sup> Ezekiel 3:15; DAC, 147v; 306, 309. The Hebrew roots that Reuchlin cites correspond to Strong’s Hebrew words numbered 3529 and 3742 at blueletterbible.org (last consulted on Jan. 10, 2018). Ezekiel’s inaugural vision, in Ezekiel 1, was especially important to Cabalists, as it formed the basis of *Merkaba* (“chariot”) mysticism.

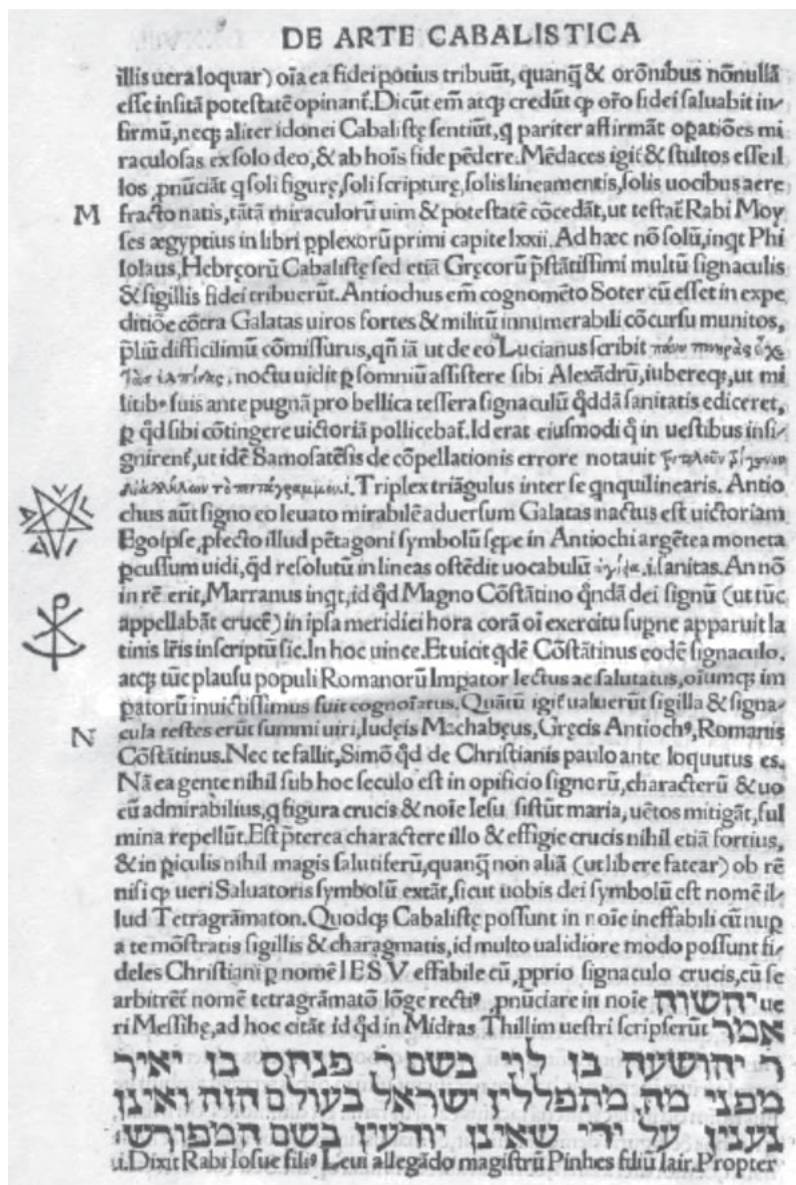


Fig. 4: Sample page of Reuchlin's *De Arte Cabalistica* (1517), employing the three biblical languages as well as talismanic sigils with both classical and Cabalistic significance. Courtesy of the University of Arizona Library's Special Collections.

primum. Vnde puto dicta sunt elementa quaisi hylementa hoc est materialia ex quibus minimis maxima fiunt.

[It really is an important matter and worthy of philosophers, if you believe your Plato. For he, like Socrates in the *Cratylus*, thought it not at all foolish to understand the letters, saying: "We have no other means than that for judging the truth of the primal names. Whenever we imitate essence with syllables and letters, it is right first to pick out the basic elements." It is from this, I think, that the elements are so named, being the *hylementa* in Greek, or the materials from which, despite their small size, big things come.]<sup>60</sup>

Simon is prepared to quote Plato (424/423–348/347 B.C.E.), who devotes a good deal of his dialogue with Cratylus to the origin of names. Toward the beginning of that dialogue, Socrates tells his friend Hermogenes: "Cratylus is right in saying that things have names by nature, and that not every man is an artificer of names, but he only who gives the name that each thing by nature has, and is able to express the true forms of things by letters and syllables."<sup>61</sup> Socrates does not simply accept the views just enunciated; indeed, as the dialogue continues he moves to a view of language closer to that of Cratylus's sparring partner Hermogenes, with whom he carries on the dialogue and who comes closer to the modern view of language in flux. Nevertheless, the statement just quoted – along with Simon's riff on it – have become widely accepted as an idealistic view of language coming from nature (*physis*) rather than law (*nomos*). One major scholar of Platonic dialogue has written that Plato's both/and view of being and becoming have influenced much Western mysticism, including theologians like Dionysius the Aeropagite (sixth century C.E.), whom Simon often cites, as well as Cabalists generally.<sup>62</sup>

We know very little about the historical Cratylus, only Aristotle's comments that he was a student of Heraclitus (ca. 575–ca. 475 B.C.E.) and a teacher of the young Plato. Aristotle notes that Cratylus accepted the Heraclitean view of nature as constant flux and that he became extremely sceptical about language in old age, preferring to point rather than to speak.<sup>63</sup> He is even said to have doubted his teacher's famous remark that one could never step into the same river twice,<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup> DAC, 59v; 314, 317.

<sup>61</sup> Plato, *The Collected Dialogues, Including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 429.

<sup>62</sup> Paul Friedländer, *Plato. Vol. I: An Introduction*, trans. Hans Meyerhoff, 2nd ed. Bollingen Series, 71 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 76 and 349, note 27A; originally published as *Platon: Seinswahrheit und Lebenswirklichkeit*, vol. 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1953).

<sup>63</sup> Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (see note 46), vol. 2, 1561–62; *Metaphysics*, book 1, chapter 6.

<sup>64</sup> *The Presocratics*, ed. Philip Wheelwright (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 71; Heraclitus, fragment 21

saying that the old man probably could not even do it once.<sup>65</sup> That Socrates would accept the teaching of Cratylus, however briefly, is less important to Simon than that the statement of Socrates was recorded by the “divine Plato” (so called by Marsilio Ficino, the scholar employed by Lorenzo de Medici, the father of Pope Leo X). The “Cratylist” view that names could capture the essence of things and ideas supported the treatment of divine names in Reuchlin’s early work on the divine names and in his important source the *Portae Lucis* (“Gates of Light”) by the thirteenth-century Cabalist Joseph Gikatilla. Simon mentions both Latin texts approvingly as he draws his lecture to a close.<sup>66</sup>

As he concludes, Simon says: “Tota nancque philosophia nostra haec est, ut bene uiuendo, bene moriamur” (This is our total philosophy, that, in living well, we die well).<sup>67</sup> He is sorry that they must part, being tired after all the discussion. The friends offer to return the following day, for they will not travel until the Frankfurt Book Fair has concluded. However, Simon says he must start on a long journey the next day, in order to attend the wedding of his uncle. The wedding of an old man is a familiar Cabalistic trope for one’s death,<sup>68</sup> and it seems that Simon is prepared to die well. The same trope of travel as death has entered Christian symbolism in allegorical stories like “The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz.”<sup>69</sup>

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**65** Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (see note 46), vol. 2, 1588–1593; *Metaphysics*, book 4, chapter 5. Aristotle noted that people who heard Cratylus orate in Athens considered him a master of evoking emotions; see *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (see note 46), 2162–64; *Rhetoric*, book 3, chapter 16.

**66** DAC, 41v–42r; 282–84. The *Liber de Verbo Mirifico* (see note 14) was first published under the name Capnion, Reuchlin’s “Grecization” of his German name, derived from *Rauch* “smoke.” It was reprinted under his own Latinized name (Hagenau and Tübingen: Thomas Anshelm, 1514). *Portae Lucis* (Augsburg: Johann Miller, 1516) was a Latin translation by Paulus Riccius of Joseph of Gikatilla, *Sha’are Orah*. The Hebrew original was a principal source for Reuchlin. Before he received a copy of the printed book from the translator’s son, he already owned manuscripts of Gikatilla (ca. 1248–1305). For a modern translation, see Joseph, the son of Abraham Gikatilla, *Sha’are Orah: Gates of Light*, trans. Ari Weinstein (New York: HarperCollins, 1994).

**67** DAC, 79v; 354, 357.

**68** The classic example is the *Pardes Rimmonim* (“Orchard of Pomegranates”) by Moses of Cordovero, written in 1548. One of the four second-century rabbis who meet there, Simeon bar Jochai, excuses himself to attend the wedding of Tiferet (“adornment”) and Malchut (“beauty”), two of the emanations that form the Cabalistic Tree of Life (see Fig. 3). After suffering a near-fatal heart attack on the eve of his seventieth birthday, the psychologist C. G. Jung dreamed that he was at this wedding; see Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Pantheon, 1961), 294.

**69** See Thomas Willard, “Dream and Symbol in the Chemical Wedding,” *Lux in Tenebris: The Visual and the Symbolic in Western Esotericism*, ed. Peter J. Forshaw. Aries Book Series, 23 (Leiden and Boston: Brill Publishing, 2017), 130–51.

Unlike the earlier dialogue, *De Arte Cabalistica* leaves its speakers as they began, with three different sets of values but with friendly respect for each other. The intended convert, it seems, is Pope Leo X and more generally European Catholics, and the conversion is from dogmatic faith in the Vulgate Bible to respect for the deeper knowledge that comes from study of the original words with the humanistic return to the sources (*ad fontes*). I suspect this move from conversion to respect comes at least partly from Reuchlin's experience in the heresy trials that he hoped to have won.

The Reformation scholar Heiko Obermann argued that Reuchlin's early "opinion" to the Bishop of Mainz was based equally on civil law that recognized Jews as neighbors and, just as much, on religious intolerance that saw them as a cursed race.<sup>70</sup> My own sense is that Reuchlin grew more tolerant over time.

## Reuchlin's "Triumph"

Many of Reuchlin's supporters expected that he would join Martin Luther's cause. And indeed, Reuchlin welcomed the "Luther affair," saying that it would detract attention from his purported heresy, while the Dominicans saw him as a precursor of Luther. In 1519, Hoogstraaten responded to *De Arte Cabalistica* in a tract on the "destruction of the Cabala" (*Destructio Cabalae*), where he added Luther and Erasmus to the list of those whose biblical translation broke with Church dogma regarding the primacy of the Latin Biblia Vulgata.<sup>71</sup> In 1520, the pope, under advisement from his cardinals, reached his decision about the Reuchlin affair.<sup>72</sup> On June 20, he condemned the *Augenspiegel* and ordered it

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<sup>70</sup> Heiko A. Oberman, "Three Sixteenth-Century Attitudes to Judaism: Reuchlin, Erasmus and," *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1983), 326–64; here 334–35. Oberman's final view on *Die Reuchlin Affäre* appears in Heiko A. Oberman, "Johannes Reuchlin: Vom Judenknechten zum Judenrechten," *Reuchlin und die Juden*, ed. Arno Herzig and Julius H. Schoeps, together with Saskia Rohde. Pforzheimer Reuchlinschriften, 3 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1993), 39–64.

<sup>71</sup> Jacobus van Hoogstraten, *Destructio Cabale, seu Cabalistiche perfile ab Ioanne Reuchlin Capnion* (Cologne: Heinrich Quentel, 1519).

<sup>72</sup> George Haven Putnam, *The Censorship of the Church of Rome, and Its Influence upon the Production and Distribution of Literature*, 2 vols. (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906), 83–85. As long as Reuchlin's name was placed in Class I of the Index, all of his writings were forbidden, not only his Cabalistic books but also his works on language and the use of biblical texts in preaching.

to be suppressed; he also fined Reuchlin heavily, and silenced him for life.<sup>73</sup> In 1521, Pfefferkorn wrote a final and victorious book about the “untruthful Reuchlin,” who was shown in the title page woodcut taking correction from Hoogstraaten.<sup>74</sup> In the woodcut, a cowering Reuchlin cries out, “I’m completely lost” (“ich ganz verloren”).

Reuchlin might have been tempted to follow Luther, who was excommunicated in January 1521. By this time, however, he had published his last book, on the proper spelling and pronunciation of Hebrew words, which he intended especially for priests.<sup>75</sup> He had turned down the invitation to become Professor of Greek and Hebrew at Luther’s University of Wittenberg, recommending instead his nephew and protégé Phillip Schwartzertdt, whom he had renamed Melancthon (literally “Black Earth”) in a Graecization of the family name. Instead, Reuchlin took the position of professor of philology at the Jesuit university in Ingolstadt. He taught Hebrew there for a year, but moved to the University of Tübingen when plague wracked Ingolstadt in 1621. After a full year as Professor of Hebrew and Greek, he visited a health spa on his way home to Stuttgart and, ironically, contracted jaundice while he was there. He died a few weeks later in Stuttgart, where he was buried beside his second wife. On his deathbed he reaffirmed his Catholic faith by being ordained priest – a practice that a Dominican priest tells continues to this day and gives recipients the benefits of priesthood without the responsibilities.

Despite his Catholicism, Reuchlin was represented as a follower of Luther in a woodcut of 1521 (Fig. 5).<sup>76</sup> Entitled “The Malignant Councillors,” it showed Luther as the “patron of freedom” with von Hutten and Reuchlin standing behind him. Luther extends a hand to Hoogstraaten, while another Dominican extends both hands to the Franciscan monk Thomas Murner, who had defended both Reuchlin and Luther against the charges from the Dominicans of Cologne, but

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<sup>73</sup> Often a friend to scholars, the pope took a far more lenient approach to the philosopher Pietro Pompanazzi (1442–1525), who in *Tractatus de Immortalitate Animae* (Bologna: Leonardi, 1516) questioned the evidence for immortality of the soul and reality of angels and demons. See Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 45–46.

<sup>74</sup> Johannes Pfefferkorn, *Ein Mitleydliche Claeg vber alle Claeg ... gegen den vngetruwen Johan Reuchlin* (Cologne: Servas Krufter, 1521)

<sup>75</sup> Johann Reuchlin, *De Accentibus et Orthographia Linguae Hebraicae* (Hagenau: Thomas Anshelm, 1518).

<sup>76</sup> From Raphael Musaeus (pseudonym of Ulrich von Hutten?), *Dialogi Murnarus Leviathan* (Strasbourg: [Johann Schott], 1521); see Fig. 3. Murner’s name is misspelt in the engraving to suggest that he is a fool (German *Naar*).

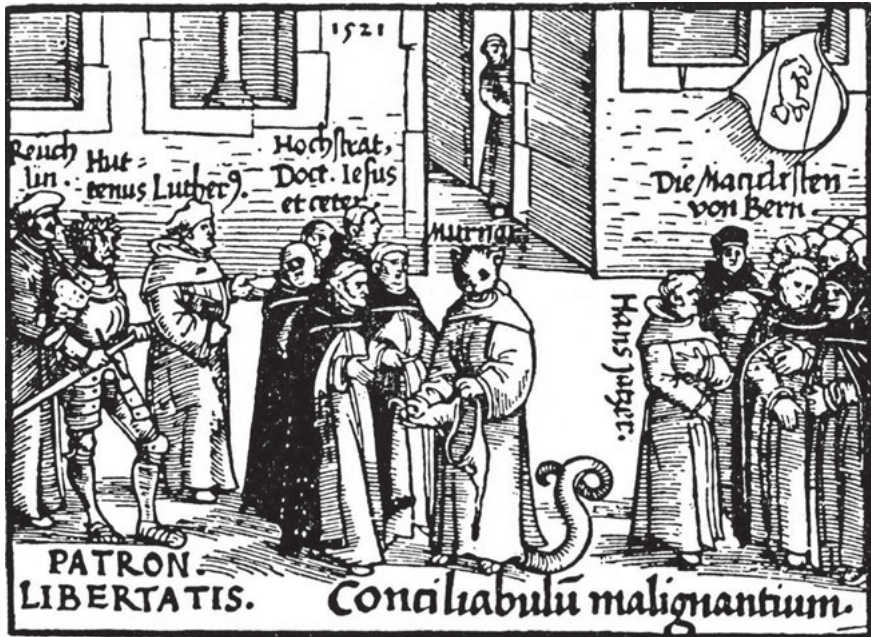


Fig. 5: Matthias Gnidias's woodcut of Reuchlin and Hutten behind Luther, the "patron of liberty" at a "council of the malignant." From Raphael Musaeus (pseudonym of Ulrich von Hutten?), *Dialogi Murnarus Leviathan* (Strasbourg: Johann Schott, 1521). Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

later used his considerable satiric skills when he wrote "about the great Lutheran Fool" (*Vom dem grossen Lutherischen Narren*).<sup>77</sup>

Meanwhile, despite Reuchlin's long residence in Stuttgart, he has remained known as "Reuchlin of Pforzheim," where he is probably the most famous of all its sons and daughters. On the five hundredth anniversary of his birth, in 1955, Pforzheim established the Reuchlin Prize for contributions to the humanities. One of the first recipients of the award was Gersholm Scholem, Professor of

77 See Ernest Voss, "Thomas Murner's Attitude in the Controversy between Murner and the Theologians of Cologne, Based on His Translations from the Hebrew and the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*," *Transaction of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters* 23 (1927): 29–40. Also see Posset, *Johann Reuchlin* (see note 4), 41–42. See also Albrecht Classen, "The Baby and the Bath Water: Satirical Laughter by Thomas Murner and Herman Bote as Catalysts for a Paradigm Shift in the Age Prior to the Protestant Reformation. Literary Comedy as a Medium to Undermine all Authorities and to Create a Power Vacuum," *Paradigm Shifts in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age* (forthcoming; see note 38).



Hebrew and Mysticism at the University of Jerusalem, who was then considered the world authority on Kabbalah. In his acceptance speech, Scholem said that some Kabbalists believed in reincarnation (Hebrew *gilgul neshamot*, “cycle of souls”) and that, if he shared the belief, he would consider himself the reincarnation of Reuchlin.<sup>78</sup>

Perhaps Luther’s old philological rival Erasmus deserves the final word. In a colloquy on “The Triumph of Capnion” (*Triumphus Capnionis*) two admirers of Reuchlin lament his death. The first speaker is [Conrad] Pellicanus (1478–1556), a Franciscan Hebraist; the other, [Johann Alexander] Brassicanus (ca. 1500–1539), who briefly succeeded Reuchlin at Ingolstadt. Brassicanus has just traveled from Tübingen, where a learned Franciscan shared a vision he had of Reuchlin crossing the bridge to Heaven. According to the Franciscan, Reuchlin was welcomed by Saint Jerome, the principal translator of the Biblia Vulgata, and was escorted into the realm of saints – all this on an authority higher than the Pope’s.<sup>79</sup> A large woodcut accompanying an early printing of Erasmus’s “Apotheosis Capnionis” showed the “triumph of Reuchlin.”<sup>80</sup>

## Conclusion

Franz Possett, author of the most detailed biography of Reuchlin that we are likely to get for some time, has called this final work “The lay theologian’s Catholic Cabala.”<sup>81</sup> He uses the word “Catholic” in two senses: the book is faithful to Roman Catholic theology (Possett is a Roman Catholic scholar of the Reformation), and it is also ecumenical, pointing to the fundamental unity of the three Abrahamic religions in their highest spiritual aspirations. Spitz remarked, “There is an unmistakable tendency in Reuchlin toward a religious universal theism.”<sup>82</sup>

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**78** Cis van Heertum, *Philosophia Symbolica* (see note 1), 15. For Scholem’s writing on Reuchlin, see Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (see note 11), 196–99, and Gershom Scholem, “Die Erforschung der Kabbala von Reuchlin bis zur Gegenwart,” *Judaica III: Studien zur jüdischen Mystik*, ed. Gershom Scholem (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973), 247–63.

**79** Erasmus, “The Apotheosis of that Incomparable Worthy, Johann Reuchlin” (“De Incomparabili heroe Ioanna Reuchlino in devorum numerum relato”), *Colloquies*, trans. and ed. Craig R. Thompson, 2 vols. *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 39–40 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), vol. 1, 244–55.

**80** A reproduction of the large (150 x 450 mm) woodcut appears in *DAC*, 360–61.

**81** Possett, *Johann Reuchlin (1455–1622): A Theological Biography* (see note 4), 625–712.

**82** Spitz, “Reuchlin – Pythagoras Reborn” (see note 33), 76.

Reuchlin was celebrated as the first humanist to achieve the triple crown of mastery in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. His “cause” became a rallying cry for humanists in Germany, where he was regarded as a leading light. Reuchlin’s only competitor for the title of leading linguist was his friend Erasmus of Rotterdam, who, like Luther, never got far with Hebrew.<sup>83</sup> Both studied manuscripts closely and influenced the spelling practices of early modern printers. Reuchlin also took interest in the culture of people who still used Greek and Hebrew, at a time when those who were educated to speak Latin were taking greater interest in the writings and ideas of the Roman world in antiquity. His whole approach to language seems to have grown out of a deep interest in people who used the biblical languages he studied, and their ethnic descendants. Many of these were people he met on the road, as he made the diplomatic, scholarly, and occasionally theological travels that secured his reputation as the greatest Christian Hebraist of his day, a linguist committed not only to the language of the Old Testament scriptures but to the beauties and wisdom in all Hebrew writings.

Reuchlin’s travels over the last fifty years of his life took him from the small town of Pforzheim to such great foreign cities as Paris, Florence, and Rome. Meanwhile, his mental travels carried him ever further: to the Cabalistic Garden of Pomegranates, where the wedding of beauty was to be celebrated, and, in the apotheosis that Erasmus described, to the heavenly fellowship in which Saint Jerome gave him a robe with tongues in three colors, representing the three biblical languages he had mastered. Although he was never penniless, like the medieval *vagantes* or “wandering scholars,”<sup>84</sup> he was obliged in his early life to travel widely as a student, translator, and diplomat. In later life, he had to travel to avoid political unrest in Swabia and the danger of plague throughout southern Germany; however, he used his travels to seek out books and manuscripts that would aid his language study as well as speakers of Greek and Hebrew who could teach him about their native tongues.

On his first diplomatic mission to Rome, in 1482, he attended a lecture by a Greek scholar and asked a question in Latin, in which he translated a famous Greek passage so perfectly that the speaker wanted to meet him afterwards and find out where he learned the language. On discovering that Reuchlin was German, the scholar, a refugee from Constantinople, said: “Because of our exile

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<sup>83</sup> In *DAC* 44v; 218–19, Philolaus (speaking for Reuchlin) pays Erasmus this compliment: “distinguished in many fields and easily the finest writer of our time. A sweet siren indeed; he most justly deserves the praise lavished on him by every lover of classics.”

<sup>84</sup> See the classic study of Helen Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars* (London: Constable & Robinson, 1927).

Greece has now flown across the Alps.” Reuchlin was thereafter said to speak Transalpine Greek.<sup>85</sup>

Later in life, when he read Hebrew on his own, Reuchlin said he felt as though he heard the voice of God speaking the words, in the language God and his angels used to address the Old Testament Patriarchs.<sup>86</sup> I have found no accounts of his classroom manner, though he surely influenced younger men such as Brassicanus, who tells of Reuchlin’s apotheosis in the colloquy of Erasmus. He seems to have held the quite modern view that learning a language should involve intellectual immersion in the culture that produced it. Perhaps the most adventurous travels of Reuchlin were linguistic, as he brought the words of Greek and Hebrew culture from their ancient sources in the Mediterranean world to the German students he taught and the larger European readership he would have in years to come.

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<sup>85</sup> Translated in van Heertum, *Philosophia Symbolica* (see note 1), 17.

<sup>86</sup> Van Heertum, *Philosophia Symbolica* (see note 1), 16.

J. Michael Fulton

## **Personality Type and Prison Survival in Early Modern Spain. The Spiritual Move from Inside to the Outside: The Inquisitorial Trials of Fray Luis de León, Gaspar de Grajal, Martín Martínez Cantalapiedra, and Alonso Gudiel**

The symposium which was the basis for this volume of essays focused on travel, space, and identity. This emphasis highlights the dynamic, fluid nature of the Medieval and Early Modern period. Indeed, as Hollister points out, constant innovations, migrations, invasions, and explorations produced ongoing change throughout those centuries.<sup>1</sup> On first glance, then, it may seem counterintuitive to suggest that an inquisitorial trial relates to the subject of this collection. However, one of the most intriguing themes explored in literature and historical research has been the reaction of notable individuals to confinement. When a person endures imprisonment, the restricted movement and social isolation impose unique stresses, which produce both physiological and psychological manifestations. In other words, though travel and spatial exploration were a driving force behind the dynamism of the medieval and early modern periods, it is also important to note the many instances where people were denied the freedom to travel and placed in confined spaces. The Spanish Inquisition was perhaps the most infamous institution in this period that restricted freedom of movement, though certainly not the only one.<sup>2</sup>

Research on confinement has expanded dramatically in recent decades. To be sure, some notable cases of isolation have been documented throughout history, such as those of Boethius, Sir Thomas More, Saint John of the Cross,

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1 C. Warren Hollister, *Medieval Europe, A Short History* (New York: Knopf, 1982), 1–2.

2 According to Henry Kamen (*The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* [New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1997]), the most recent calculations indicate that the Spanish Inquisition imprisoned fewer people than secular courts throughout Europe (203–04). Joseph Pérez (*The Spanish Inquisition: A History*, trans. Janet Lloyd [New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2005]) argues, however, that though dissenters were imprisoned and executed elsewhere in Europe, “In Spain, one finds an intolerance admittedly less deadly, but institutionalised, organised and bureaucratised, which lasted far longer” (175).

and Dostoevsky.<sup>3</sup> However, it was only in the mid to late twentieth century that researchers began systematically analyzing how people adapt and survive in restricted environments. The interest in such conditions relates to technological and political developments which exposed people to types of isolation that were previously unknown, including nuclear submarines, Antarctic research stations, and space crafts. Scholarly inquiry into how people endure trauma, and particularly the strain of confined settings, has expanded dramatically in recent decades, and offers new insight into how the human psyche responds to such pressures.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of this paper is to bring that research to bear in order to shed light on the inquisitorial trial of one of Spain's most prominent literary figures, Fray Luis de León (1527–1591). Celebrated today for his 23 original Spanish odes, during his lifetime he was renowned primarily as a professor of theology and author of several devotional works. Arrested by the Inquisition in March 1572 for penning a Spanish commentary on the *Song of Solomon*, and for his views on biblical interpretation, he was held in solitary confinement until his release in December of 1576. His trial was tied to those of three other scholars arrested on related charges: Gaspar de Grajal, Martín Martínez Cantalapiedra, and Alonso Gudiel. The quartet were arrested within months of each other, charged with similar offenses, and held in the same inquisitorial jail in Valladolid. However, one aspect of these trials that current scholarship does not address is the enigma of Fray Luis's survival. Specifically, why was it that Fray Luis, despite being the sickliest of the four scholars arrested that summer, not only survived his trial but went on to write nearly all his extant works after his release, while Grajal and Gudiel died in prison, and Martínez's only known work antedates his arrest? In order to explore the question, this study draws on psychological research on confinement, personality type, and trauma recovery. On the basis of that literature, I will argue that Fray Luis's hardy, pugnacious nature helps explain his recovery from the trial and his subsequent literary productivity.

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3 *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, ed. John Marenbon. (Cambridge, New York, et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Louis L. Martz and Frank Manley, "Introduction," *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation, Complete Works of Sir Thomas More*, vol. 12 (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1976), xvii–clxiv; Crisógono de Jesús Sacramentado, *Vida de San Juan de la Cruz, Vida y obras completas de San Juan de la Cruz*, ed. Matías del Niño Jesús and Lucinio Ruano (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1973), 3–356; here, 126–47; Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: A Writer in his Time* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010).

4 For example: *The Anatomy of Loneliness*, ed. Joseph Hartog, J. Ralph Audy, and Yehudi A. Cohen. (New York: International Universities Press, 1980); *Man in Isolation and Confinement*, ed. John Rasmussen (Chicago: Aldine, 1973); Anthony Storr, *Solitude: A Return to the Self* (New York: Ballantine, 1988); Peter Suedfeld et al., "Reactions and Attributes of Prisoners in Solitary Confinement," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 9.3 (Sept. 1982): 303–40.

## Imprisonment and Stress

To begin, let us review what he and the other three endured during their incarceration, as documented in the transcripts of their respective trials.<sup>5</sup> Educated as a Renaissance scholar, Fray Luis was hired as a professor of theology at the University of Salamanca in 1561.<sup>6</sup> His philological approach to biblical exegesis earned him the disfavor of scholastically trained colleagues, who denounced him and two other like-minded academics – Gaspar de Grajal and Martín Martínez Cantalapiedra – who taught at the same institution. In March of 1572, all three were arrested by the Inquisition.<sup>7</sup>

In July of that year, the Holy Office was also persuaded to detain Alonso Gudiel, theology professor at the University of Osuna.<sup>8</sup> All four were conveyed to Valladolid for trial, and charges against them revolved around a few key points: consulting Rabbinical authorities regarding the meaning of Hebrew words in the Old Testament, suggesting interpretations that differed from the Vulgate and patristic sources, and emphasizing the literal, historical meaning of certain Old Testament books, particularly the *Song of Solomon*. Since all four prisoners were from *converso* families, a current of anti-Semitism runs through the accusations as well.<sup>9</sup> Finally, an extra charge against Fray Luis was that he had translated the *Song of Solomon* into Spanish, in violation of the inquisitorial ban of 1559.<sup>10</sup> The fates of the quartet are notable: Gudiel died after only nine months, and Grajal

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5 Fray Luis's trial transcript is available in an excellent modern edition: Ángel Alcalá, *Proceso inquisitorial de Fray Luis de León: Edición paleográfica, anotada y crítica* (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León, Consjería de Cultura y Turismo, 1991). The trials of the other three were published in the mid-twentieth century: Miguel de la Pinta Llorente, *Procesos Inquisitoriales contra los Catedráticos Hebraístas de Salamanca: Gaspar de Grajal, Martínez de Cantalapiedra y Fray Luis de León. I-Gaspar de Grajal. Estudio y transcripción paleográfica* (Madrid: Monasterio de El Escorial, 1935); Miguel de la Pinta Llorente, *Causa criminal contra el biblista Alonso Gudiel, Catedrático de la Universidad de Osuna* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Jerónimo Zurita, 1942); Miguel de la Pinta Llorente, *Proceso criminal contra el hebraísta salmantino Martín Martínez de Cantalapiedra* (Madrid and Barcelona: Instituto Arias Montano de Estudios Hebráicos y Oriente Próximo, 1946).

6 Aubrey F. G. Bell, *Luis de León: A Study of the Spanish Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925), 106.

7 Grajal was the first to be arrested, on March 1 (Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* [see note 5], 37). Martínez and Fray Luis were arrested on the same day later that month, on March 27 (Alcalá, *Proceso* [see note 5], 41; Pinta Llorente, *Proceso* [see note 5], 117).

8 There may have been a clerical error in documenting the exact date: in Pinta Llorente's edition, the arrest order is dated July 23, but the confirmation of Gudiel's arrival in jail is dated the 18th. Pinta Llorente, *Causa* (see note 5), 67.

9 See Ángel Alcalá, *Literatura y Ciencia ante la Inquisición Española* (Madrid: Laberinto, 2001), 71.

10 Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 73.

after three and a half years; Fray Luis was exonerated and released just shy of the five year mark, and Martínez was also absolved, after five years and three months.<sup>11</sup>

Since all four were housed in the same facility, it is remarkable that Fray Luis should have been one of the two to survive, given that his health was delicate to begin with.<sup>12</sup> However, recent psychological research on trauma survival and recovery suggests that the aggressive, defiant tone he often took with Inquisitors, and which sometimes is evident in his post-trial works, may have been instrumental in him enduring and recuperating from the stress of incarceration.

Let us summarize, then, the pressures he and fellow inmates would have faced in the facility in Valladolid. As documented in lists of official protocols promulgated by the Holy Office in the sixteenth century, edited in a modern edition by Miguel Jiménez Montserín, prisoners were to be isolated as much as possible – solitary confinement was the goal, when circumstances permitted, and no visitors or correspondence were allowed.<sup>13</sup> Historians such as Lea and Pérez have confirmed that this policy was enforced generally,<sup>14</sup> and Fray Luis's trial transcript indicates that officials in Valladolid followed the statute as well.<sup>15</sup> The trial transcripts of Gaspar, Martínez, and Gudiel hint that there may have been exceptions, but overall corroborate the conclusion that isolation was the norm.<sup>16</sup> The protocols also call on prosecutors to request permission to torture prisoners, with the accused present, in order to hasten

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11 Pinta Llorente, *Causa* (see note 5), 200; Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 479; Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 699–702; Pinta Llorente, *Proceso* (see note 5), 397–98.

12 He complained of his health throughout the trial, as is documented below. The inquisitors themselves even acknowledged his frail constitution: Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 44, 675.

13 Miguel Jiménez Montserín, *Introducción a la Inquisición Española* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1980). The most relevant for this study is the 1561 list, published by Inquisitor General Fernando de Valdés. Isolation of prisoners is repeatedly emphasized in this document: 203, 204, 215, 227, 232, 234.

14 Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1906), 2:513–14; Joseph Pérez, *The Spanish Inquisition* (see note 2), 144.

15 León makes an isolated allusion to not wanting to die “con un moro a la cabecera” (with a Moor at my bedside) (Alcalá, *Proceso* [see note 5], 604). However, apart from this passing comment, there is no other evidence of his having a cellmate, while there are references to his being held in isolation (Alcalá, *Proceso* [see note 5], 452, 462, 463, 594).

16 Gudiel apparently did have a cellmate, at least toward the end of his trial: during two audiences held in his cell just days before he died, the other prisoner was removed for privacy (Pinta Llorente, *Causa* [see note 5], 192, 200). Grajal complained of loneliness at one point, but later complained that a cellmate was untidy and interfered with his theological studies, asking that the man be removed; Inquisitors complied (Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* [see note 5], 169, 466). Martínez's trial gives no indication that he ever had a cellmate.

confessions,<sup>17</sup> and again all four trial transcripts demonstrate this order was carried out.<sup>18</sup> Naturally, any sort of physical confinement results in limited motor activity, or hypokinesia, as well as a loss of autonomy and uncertainty about one's fate. Finally, prisoners were denied confession, and books and any other materials prisoners wished to have in their cells had to be approved by inquisitors.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond these general sources of strain, the inquisitorial jail in Valladolid subjected prisoners to additional, unique stresses. To begin with, in the years immediately prior to the arrest of Fray Luis and his colleagues, officials at Valladolid wrote to the Supreme Council of the Holy Office multiple times complaining of the deterioration of the prison buildings. In fact, serious “dificultades de buen acomodo [...] se presentaban en las cárceles de la Inquisición de Valladolid” (difficulties of accommodation presented themselves in the inquisitorial jails in Valladolid).<sup>20</sup> In 1568, overcrowding and the state of disrepair of the Valladolid prison were so pressing that officials there wrote to Madrid:

por descargo de nuestras conciencias no podemos dexar de dezir que con las cárceles que agora ay, no se haciendo estas nuevas, ni el Officio se puede hazer como se deue, ni los reos están guardados.

[for the sake of our own consciences, we cannot fail to inform you that with the current jails that we now have, unless new ones are built, neither the job can be done as it should, nor are prisoners guarded.]<sup>21</sup>

As Valladolid and the Supreme Council corresponded regarding possible solutions and attending costs, Valladolid officials reiterated that year, “padecemos trabajo con las [cárceles] que al presente tenemos, porque el tercero día de la Pasqua se nos salieron dos presos dellas” (we are having troubles with the jails that we currently have, because the third day of Easter Week two prisoners escaped).<sup>22</sup> Two years later, however, the Council still had not settled on what to do, and Valladolid again urged, “ay urgentísima necesidad de cárceles” (there is very urgent need of jails).<sup>23</sup>

17 Jiménez Montserín, *Introducción* (see note 13), 208.

18 See Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 74; Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 111; Pinta Llorente, *Proceso* (see note 5), 150; Pinta Llorente, *Causa* (see note 5), 143.

19 Jiménez Montserín, *Introducción* (see note 13), 203, 216, 234.

20 Pinta Llorente, *Las cárceles inquisitoriales españolas*. Aportaciones para la historia del sentimiento religioso en España (Madrid: n.p., 1949), 153.

21 Pinta Llorente, *Cárceles* (see note 20), 154.

22 Pinta Llorente, *Cárceles* (see note 20), 154.

23 Pinta Llorente, *Cárceles* (see note 20), 155.



The underfunding and general neglect evident in the Valladolid prison may explain why Fray Luis complained during his trial that he often went hungry: no one saw to his needs except

un mochachico que está ally preso que es simple y para avelle de despertar padeçe trabajo con el y a venido dia de quedarse desmayado de hanbre por no tener quien le dé su orden que le sirva.

[a boy who is a prisoner there who is a simpleton, and it is difficult to wake him and there have been days when the accused was faint from hunger owing to there being no one to order the boy to serve him.]<sup>24</sup>

In addition, conditions in the cells were arduous: Gudiel asked for winter clothing in August, and by the next spring had a skin infection, fever, and severe dysentery<sup>25</sup>; Martínez was treated by the prison doctor for fever and a severe lice infestation, and at the end of his trial wrote that the prison had destroyed his health<sup>26</sup>; Grajal succumbed to unknown causes within three years,<sup>27</sup> and Fray Luis complained about health issues throughout his trial, as will be documented shortly. Obviously, then, imprisonment in that particular jail was taxing for these four scholars, as it undoubtedly was for all inquisitorial prisoners. Indeed, modern research suggests that that only the death of a child or a spouse is more stressful than incarceration.<sup>28</sup>

## Research on Trauma Survival and Personality

In our generation, research on emotional trauma has expanded significantly. The physiological and psychological impacts have been examined in many studies, for instance.<sup>29</sup> And in research on events like Hurricane Katrina and other

<sup>24</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 594.

<sup>25</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Causa* (see note 5), 152, 190.

<sup>26</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Proceso* (see note 5), 275, 392.

<sup>27</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 466, 478.

<sup>28</sup> E. S. Paykel, "Recent Life Events and Clinical Depression," *Life Stress and Illness*, ed. E. K. Eric Gunderson and Richard H. Rahe (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1974), 134–63; here 150.

<sup>29</sup> For example, *Life Stress and Illness*, ed. E. K. Eric Gunderson and Richard H. Rahe. (see note 28), Stephen J. Lepore and Joshua M. Smyth, *The Writing Cure: How Expressive Writing Promotes Health and Emotional Well-Being* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2002); Sheldon Cohen, Denies Janicki-Deverts, and Gregory E. Miller, "Psychological Stress and Disease," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 298 (2007): 1685–87; Margaret E. Kemeny and Manfred Schedlowski, "Understanding the Interaction between Psychosocial Stress and Immune-Related Diseases: A Stepwise Approach," *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity* 21 (2007):

tragedies, mental health professionals are analyzing why some individuals react to trauma with resignation and defeatism, while others recover and even draw strength from calamity.<sup>30</sup> One aspect of this research that is relevant here is the work being done on personality types. Specifically, some personalities suffer less and recover more quickly from trauma.

Kobasa argues that the trait that leads to this sort of resilience “is best characterized by the term *hardiness*,” and explains that one key element of *hardiness* is “the belief that [people] can control or influence the events of their experience.”<sup>31</sup> “Hardiness” is defined in the same terms in reviews by Dolbier, Smith and Steinhardt, and by Ong, Bergeman, and Boker.<sup>32</sup> The latter authors add that hardiness may also be referred to as “ego resiliency, defined as the capacity to overcome, steer through, and bounce back from adversity.”<sup>33</sup> According to Dolbier, Smith, and Steinhardt, persons possessing this trait adopt more active coping strategies, and thus demonstrate “less stress and better physical and mental health.”<sup>34</sup> The effectiveness of active coping, including problem solving and efforts to influence a stressful situation, have also been emphasized by Wadsworth, DeCarlo Santiago, and Einhorn,<sup>35</sup> while Natani notes the resiliency of “tough-minded”

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1009–18; Stephen W. Porges, “Cardiac Vagal Tone: A Physiological Index of Stress,” *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 19 (1995): 225–33; Alan Rozanski, James A. Blumenthal and Jay Kaplan, “Impact of Psychological Factors on the Pathogenesis of Cardiovascular Disease and Implications for Therapy,” *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association* 99 (1999): 2192–217.

**30** For example, Robert S. Andersen, “Operation Homecoming: Psychological Observations of Repatriated Vietnam Prisoners of War,” *Psychiatry* 38 (Feb. 1975): 65–74; John E. Deaton et al, “Coping Activities in Solitary Confinement of U.S. Navy POWs in Vietnam,” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 7 (1977): 239–57; Janice Bell Meisenhelder and John P. Marcum, “Responses of Clergy to 9/11: Posttraumatic Stress, Coping, and Religious Outcomes,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43.4 (2004): 547–54; Julio F. P. Peres, et al, “Spirituality and Resilience in Trauma Victims,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 46 (2007): 343–50; Andrew J. Weaver, et al, “Trends in the Scientific Study of Religion, Spirituality, and Health: 1965–2000,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 45 (2006): 208–14.

**31** Suzanne C. Kobasa, “Stressful Life Events, Personality, and Health: An Inquiry into Hardiness,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 37.1 (1979): 1–11; here 3.

**32** Christyn L. Dolbier, Shanna E. Smith, and Mary A. Steinhardt, “Relationships of Protective Factors to Stress and Symptoms of Illness,” *American Journal of Behavioral Health* 31.4 (2007): 423–33; here 424; Anthony D. Ong, C. S. Bergeman, and Steven M. Boker, “Resilience Comes of Age: Defining Features in Later Adulthood,” *Journal of Personality* 77.6 (2009): 1777–804; here 1783.

**33** Ong, Bergeman, and Boker, “Resilience” (see note 32), 1782.

**34** Dolbier, Smith, and Steinhardt, “Relationships” (see note 32), 425.

**35** Martha E. Wadsworth, Catherine DeCarlo Santiago, and Lindsey Einhorn, “Coping with Displacement from Hurricane Katrina: Predictors of One-Year Post-Traumatic stress and Depression Symptom Trajectories,” *Anxiety, Stress and Coping* 22 (2009): 413–32; here 416.

individuals.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, Hartog argues that where resistance is possible, “Fighting back [against adversity] is more conducive to mental health than the passive acquiescence that leads to despair.”<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Lazarus and Folkman suggest that “passive acceptance, helplessness, and depression result in a poorer outlook for survival [...] than anger, complaining, or fighting to stay alive or to control one’s circumstances.”<sup>38</sup>

This research has important implications for the historical cases we are analyzing. In contrast with the other three scholars housed at Valladolid, Fray Luis adopted a contentious, adversarial posture toward his inquisitors. Possibly in connection to his father and two uncles being lawyers,<sup>39</sup> he asserted his own innocence energetically and vehemently, denouncing witnesses and even scolding the inquisitors at times, while Grajal, Martínez and Gudiel seem to have adopted a more resigned, compliant stance. In fact, I would suggest that, in his “tough-minded” attitude and his evident belief that he could control or influence his circumstances, Fray Luis demonstrated the very hardness that has been found to protect against the effects of trauma and lead to faster recovery.

## Gudiel, Grajal, and Martínez: Resignation in the Face of Adversity

In order to establish a baseline or control, let us consider first the other three humanists: of these, Gudiel was the most passive or resigned. I have not been able to find any complaints against the inquisitors, nor any against the malicious witnesses who denounced him. Indeed, he seems to have responded to his imprisonment with acceptance and a sense of powerlessness. In late March of 1573, less than a year into the trial, when his health began to decline, it was an official, not Gudiel, who drew the attention of the authorities to the pathetic condition

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<sup>36</sup> Kirmach Natani, “The Psychophysiology of Adaptation and Competence: Altered States of Consciousness during Antarctic Wintering,” *From Antarctica to Outer Space: Life in Isolation and Confinement*, ed. Albert A. Harrison, Yvonne A. Clearwater, and Christopher P. McKay (New York, Berlin, et al.: Springer-Verlag, 1991), 297–303; here 298.

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Hartog, “Introduction: The Anatomization,” *The Anatomy of Loneliness* (see note 4), 1–12; here 9.

<sup>38</sup> Richard S. Lazarus and Susan Folkman, *Stress, Appraisal and Coping* (New York: Springer, 1984), 213.

<sup>39</sup> Fray Luis’s father and one uncle were lawyers in the royal court, while another uncle was professor of canon law at the University of Salamanca. See Bell, *Luis de León* (see note 6), 88.

of the prisoner.<sup>40</sup> On April 6, Gudiel finally took the initiative to request confession, insisting that he was near death; the prison physician observed fever, an acute skin infection, and dysentery resulting in severe hemorrhaging.<sup>41</sup> Just two days later, the accused submitted a statement claiming to be too sick to attend an audience.<sup>42</sup> Later the same week, the prison doctor interceded on Gudiel's behalf, reiterating his comments on Gudiel's severe skin infection and life-threatening case of dysentery, but when the inquisitors remained unmoved, Gudiel died three days later.<sup>43</sup> That he only filed two complaints during his imprisonment, and those within weeks of succumbing to multiple severe ailments, suggests that he believed himself incapable of swaying inquisitors or affecting his situation by his own efforts. His docile stance throughout the trial supports Pinta Llorente's observation that Gudiel's personality was marked by "suavidad, discreción y melancolía" (softness, discretion, and melancholy), rather than the "turbión pasional" (passionate flood) so evident in Fray Luis.<sup>44</sup> Gudiel's death after less than a year in jail seems to confirm that, as Dolbier, Smith, and Steinhardt maintain, a passive approach to strain is associated with "greater stress and worse physical and mental health."<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, Martínez's silence in the face of disease and delays suggests that, like Gudiel, he responded to his arrest by what Kobasa terms

less sense of personal resource, more acquiescence, more encroachments of meaninglessness, and a conviction that the change has been externally determined with no possibility of control on his part.<sup>46</sup>

He filed only two requests that inquisitors proceed with greater dispatch, and both appear in September of 1576, more than four years after his arrest. In addition, both were brief and rather plaintive, with nothing like the vigor we will document later in Fray Luis's protests. In the first instance, at the end of a lengthy oral statement, Martínez added almost as an afterthought, "y suplica le despachen con brevedad su causa" (and he requests that his case be resolved quickly).<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Causa* (see note 5), 189. In his statement, the inquisitor documented leprosy on Gudiel's arms and torso, said he had been bled four times recently, and commented on the dank atmosphere of the cell.

<sup>41</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Causa* (see note 5), 190.

<sup>42</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Causa* (see note 5), 192.

<sup>43</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Causa* (see note 5), 197, 200.

<sup>44</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Causa* (see note 5), 25.

<sup>45</sup> Dolbier, Smith, and Steinhardt, "Relationships" (see note 32), 425.

<sup>46</sup> Kobasa, "Stressful Life Events" (see note 31), 9.

<sup>47</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Proceso* (see note 5), 357.

The second example comes in a document Martínez submitted a week after the oral statement just cited; again near the end, the accused added, “este negocio se puede tractar fuera de carcel, y yo recibo notable impedimento en mi salud con tan diuturna carcel” (this matter can be dealt with outside the jail, and I am receiving notable detriment to my health with such a long imprisonment).<sup>48</sup> Eight months later, in May of 1577, he complained that the result of the trial was “destruir mi vida, honrra, salud, y hacienda” (to destroy my life, honor, health, and fortune).<sup>49</sup> But this protest came after five years and two months of imprisonment. Importantly, back in the summer of 1575, or a year and more before these complaints, it was a prison doctor again who urged inquisitors to attend to Martínez’s health: the physician stated that he had treated the prisoner for recurring fever, a severe lice infestation, grave malnutrition, and added, “esta tan flaco y gastado y tan maltratado y suzio de bestidos, por no los querer el mejorar y mudar, que tiene temor que se morira” (he is so thin and emaciated, and so filthy in his clothes, due to them not being changed, that he fears the prisoner will die).<sup>50</sup> Given Martínez’s alarming condition during that summer, it is remarkable that he took no steps to seek assistance from the Holy Office.

Grajal is the only one of these three prisoners who showed a spark of defiance like what we see in Fray Luis. In the first place, he complained repeatedly about the glacial pace of his proceedings.<sup>51</sup> He also complained about the isolation, pleading in January of 1573, “no permitan que yo sólo en esta cárzel esté” (don’t let me be all alone in this jail),<sup>52</sup> describing his cell as “este triste lugar” (this sad place), and “una cárzel tan áspera” (such a harsh jail).<sup>53</sup> In addition, he accused one witness of making false allegations, “fingiéndolo él por engañar a vuestras Mercedes y moberles falsamente ha hazer lo que hizieron de prenderme” (making it up in order to deceive your graces and move you falsely to do that which you have done, and imprison me).<sup>54</sup> Another witness, he alleged, deliberately provided false testimony, hoping the sensational nature of the charge would convince inquisitors to arrest Grajal; when Grajal was indeed arrested, the witness changed his tune to avoid being charged with perjury.<sup>55</sup> He even went so far as to accuse Valladolid officials of neglecting their obligation to bring the trial

<sup>48</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Proceso* (see note 5), 361.

<sup>49</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Proceso* (see note 5), 392.

<sup>50</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Proceso* (see note 5), 275.

<sup>51</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 169, 170, 210, 212, 218, 269–70, 351, 429.

<sup>52</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 169.

<sup>53</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 170, 218.

<sup>54</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 210.

<sup>55</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 214.

to a close, commenting in a document dated March of 1575, “yo he sido agrabiado por vuestras mercedes, ansí en la prisión tan larga como en la dilación que ha auido en la expedición y despcaho de mi negocio” (I have been wronged by your graces, both in my long imprisonment and in the delay which has occurred in the processing and conclusion of my case).<sup>56</sup> In the same statement, Grajal also leveled blame at the court-appointed theological advisor, lamenting,

desde Mayo [de 1574] asta agora, avnque estuvo muchos días a mi costa, siendo negocio de dos o tres días de estudio, [...] no ha acabado de resolver el negocio, y me a detenido y detiene la caussa sin caussa y raçon que justa sea, en grande daño mío.

[since May [of 1574] until now, although he was present many days at my expense, and though it was a matter requiring only two or three days of study, he has not resolved my case, and has delayed and continues to delay my case without just cause or reason, to my great harm.]<sup>57</sup>

In addition, in the month leading up to his death in September of 1575, Grajal lodged two complaints about his deteriorating health. In the first, from early August of that year, he stated, “me hallo falto de salud y con gran afflictión, y con temor de perecer en el aposento y cárceles en que estoy. A vuestras mercedes suplico me manden dar por cárcel vn monasterio desta villa” (I am in poor health and suffering great affliction, and in fear of dying in the jail where I am. I plead that your graces order me to be given a monastery in this village as a prison).<sup>58</sup> Almost exactly a month later, he implored, “le suplica a vuestras mercedes [...] que me mandasen pasarme, mientras que estoy malo, a alguna casa” (I request that your graces order me to be moved, while I am sick, to some private house), and additionally requested “suplico me dén quien me sirva, pues [...] no es raçon que yo esté sin quien me pueda menear y limpiar” (I implore you to appoint someone to care for me, since it is not right for me to not have anyone to move me and clean me); he concluded this plea, “por Jesuchristo pido dén el más consuelo que pudieren a este enfermo” (in Christ’s name I ask you to give as much comfort as you can to this sick man).<sup>59</sup> Grajal perished a mere 48 hours after penning this communiqué. However, the fact that several months often passed between these complaints differentiates Grajal’s level of assertiveness from that of Fray Luis. In terms of the frequency and vehemence of his complaints, Fray Luis put even Grajal to shame.

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<sup>56</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 429.

<sup>57</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 430.

<sup>58</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 466–67.

<sup>59</sup> Pinta Llorente, *Procesos* (see note 5), 478–79.

## Fray Luis: Resistance to Adversity

To begin with, in contrast with the examples noted above, Fray Luis complained throughout the trial of numerous issues. In fact, his litany of written complaints began less than a week after his arrest. Only five days after entering the inquisitorial jail, he complained in writing of the jail's environment and expressed a fear of dying there. After a brief preamble, this document – titled “Protestaçion de fray Luys sobre si le tomare la muerte subitamente” (Protestation of Fray Luis in case death should come upon him suddenly) – commenced, “Lo primero que yo protesto ...” (The first thing is that I protest ...).<sup>60</sup> Over the next five years, inquisitors would grow intimately familiar with this truculent tone. Only a day later, he submitted a request for several items to be brought to his cell, including medicine he typically used for a heart condition, remarking, “nunca tuve dello mas necesidad que agora” (I never had more need of it than now).<sup>61</sup>

This inclination to lodge official protests, and the litigious pugnacity they reveal, is characteristic of Fray Luis's dealings with the Holy Office throughout his prosecution. For instance, beginning at about the seventh month, his protests against the laborious pace of the trial are too numerous to catalog.<sup>62</sup> His complaints about his fragile health are also significant. We have already noted, for instance, León's initial statement, submitted days after his arrest, in which he requested medicine for his heart. Likewise, near the end of the trial, the prisoner alluded to his “natural flaqueza y enfermedad” (natural weakness and sickness).<sup>63</sup> Several other times in the intervening years, he reminded inquisitors of their responsibility to monitor his health, often in a persistent tone. For instance, in 1573 he referred to himself as “tan delicado y lleno de enfermedades” (so delicate and full of sicknesses), and claimed, “traigo poca salud” (I am in poor health).<sup>64</sup> In 1575 he filed similar protests, claiming to be “con notable peligro de my vida” (in notable danger of my life) that July, and in November pleading that inquisitors conclude his trial, worrying lest “en este tiempo el Señor me llamare, lo cual devo temer por el mucho trabajo que paso y por mis pocas fuerças” (during this time the Lord should call me, which I fear because of the great suffering I am enduring and my feeble condition).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 43.

<sup>61</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 44.

<sup>62</sup> A partial list of his complaints against delays would include the following: Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 371, 385, 395–97, 424, 428, 445, 482, 604, 641.

<sup>63</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 600.

<sup>64</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 293, 371.

<sup>65</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 567, 604.

In addition to protesting delays and pleading for medical attention, Fray Luis took a noticeably more aggressive tone than the other prisoners we have discussed, when it came to confronting the testimony of hostile witnesses. In inquisitorial trials, Kamen has observed that one of the most effective defense strategies was to accuse witnesses of being moved by personal malice,<sup>66</sup> and Fray Luis exploited this tactic routinely. He denounced witnesses on the grounds of their being part of the Dominican order, for instance, which was notably at odds with his own Augustinian order. In a statement from May of 1573, he aimed to discredit one witness's allegations by countering, "debe ser alguno de los frayles dominicos o de las otras personas que yo tengo señaladas por enemigas" (it must be one of the Dominican friars, or one of the other people I have indicated as my enemies).<sup>67</sup> The following year, he reiterated his distrust of that order, maintaining, "yo tengo tachados por apasionados y sospechosos a todos los frailes de la orden de So. Domingo" (I have called into question the credibility of the friars of the order of Saint Dominic, since they are impassioned and unreliable).<sup>68</sup>

But he went well beyond this elementary tactic, often calling into question witnesses' intellectual capacity and reasoning skills. For instance, correctly guessing that León de Castro, one of his most ardent enemies, was behind some of the accusations, Fray Luis remarked that Castro, "metido en disputa no entiende lo que dize ni lo que haze" (once in a dispute, understands neither what he says nor what he does), and asserted that "en ninguna cosa este testigo sabe dezir la verdad" (this witness does not know how to tell the truth about any matter).<sup>69</sup> Fray Luis also referred to Castro as a man "de juicio turbado y de mas turbada consciencia" (of confused judgment and of more confused conscience), and commented disdainfully, "am[a] a sy y a sus cosas con tanta demasia que a todo lo que desdize del le d[a] nombre de herejes y de judios" (he loves himself and his own ways so inordinately that he calls anyone who disagrees with him a Jew and a heretic).<sup>70</sup> He also discounted Castro's testimony, on the grounds that "no depuso ni denunció lo que yo formalmente dezia porque era cosa llana, sino lo que el confusa y maliciosamente colligia, para con la confusion hazer escandalo" (did not inform or report what I formally said, because it was a simple matter, but rather what he confusingly and maliciously inferred, in order to cause a scandal with the confusion).<sup>71</sup> He additionally contended that Castro's motive was "con

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<sup>66</sup> Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition* (see note 2), 195–96.

<sup>67</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 276.

<sup>68</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 425.

<sup>69</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 225, 273.

<sup>70</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 253, 259.

<sup>71</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 261.



calumnias y mentiras engañar a Vs. mds.” (to deceive your graces with fabrications and lies).<sup>72</sup>

Bartolomé de Medina, another of Fray Luis’s primary detractors, was the target of equally harsh language from the prisoner. In March of 1573, in his first oral response to Medina’s testimony, León sneered that “este to. depone sys ruynes sospechas y ruynes entrañas” (this witness testifies [on the basis of] his contemptible suspicions and contemptible heart).<sup>73</sup> Two months later, in a lengthy written statement, Fray Luis declared that Medina, not finding any legitimate grounds of accusation, “depone no lo que yo dezia y el avia visto sino lo que deseaba que dixese o avia soñado aver yo dicho” (reports not what I said and what he has seen, but rather what he wishes or dreams that I said).<sup>74</sup> León went on to attack Medina’s credibility on doctrinal questions, based on the latter’s ignorance: when Medina alleged that Fray Luis was teaching theological novelities – a very serious charge in Counter-Reformation Spain – Fray Luis countered,

este testigo llama novedad todo lo que no halla en sus papeles. Y como el ha visto poco y moderno, a quien desbuelbe lo antiguo y lo que está en los sanctos y en los concilios y lo trae a luz, llamale amigo de novedad.

[this witness calls anything he doesn’t find in his own papers novelty. And since he has seen little, and that from modern [sources], he calls anyone who uncovers and reveals ancient matters, and those which are found in the saints and councils, a fan of novelty.]<sup>75</sup>

Fray Luis treated other witnesses with equal contempt. He skewered one group of accusers by applying a well-known Castilian proverb, “En poco scientes, y en mucho arrogantes” (Knowledgeable in little, arrogant in much).<sup>76</sup> He dismissed another witness’s remarks with the comment, “se vee claramente el to. no entiende lo que dize” (it is evident that the witness does not understand what he is saying).<sup>77</sup> When a confused student made an utterly ridiculous charge – “que sola la fe justificava o por cualquier pecado mortal se perdia la fe o otro error” (that faith alone justified, or that faith could be lost through any mortal sin, or some other error)<sup>78</sup> – Fray Luis brushed the accusation aside, arguing, “los estudiantes ignorantes infieren syn proposito desatinos de lo que oyen a sus

<sup>72</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 269.

<sup>73</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 219.

<sup>74</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 249.

<sup>75</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 251.

<sup>76</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 277.

<sup>77</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 227. Fray Luis was quite right in this case: the witness had accused him of favoring Saint Jerome’s translation over the Vulgate, apparently not realizing that the saint’s version and the Vulgate were one and the same (Alcalá, *Proceso* [see note 5], 34–35).

<sup>78</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 10.

maestros, y que assy debio de ser lo que el testigo dize” (some ignorant students infer unfounded foolishness from what they hear from their teachers, and that must be what happened in the case of this witness).<sup>79</sup> And regarding a witness who was offended by the erotic tone of some passages in Fray Luis’s commentary on the *Song of Solomon*, he mockingly expressed marvel that the man took umbrage at the exposition’s graphic physical descriptions of the bride and bridegroom’s passion, but apparently found nothing objectionable in the original text. With scathing sarcasm, Fray Luis wrote:

lo que tiene en aquel mi librillo mas sonido de amores carnales es el mismo texto [...]. Ansi que a este el texto le offende, y yo ya que le puse en romance no pude escusar de offendelle, porque no tenia otros vocablos con que romançar *oscula, uvera, amica mea, ferosa mea*, y lo semejante, sino diciendo besos, y pechos, y my amada, y mi hermosa, y otras cosas asi, porque no sé otro romance del que me enseñaron mis amas que es el que ordinariamente hablamos, que a saber el lenguaje secreto y artificioso con que este my testigo y sus conortes suelen declarar sus conceptos usara de otros vocablos mas espirituales.

[in my little book, that which sounds like carnal love comes from the text itself [...]. So the text offends this man, and since I rendered it in Spanish I could not help offending him, because I didn’t have any other words with which to translate *oscula, uvera, amica mea, ferosa mea*, and the like, but with kisses, and breasts, and my beloved, and my beautiful one, and other such things, because I don’t know any Spanish except that which my nursemaids taught me, which is what we commonly speak, since if I knew the secret and exalted language with which this witness of mine and his associates usually declare their concepts, I would have used other more spiritual words.]<sup>80</sup>

The derisive tone he adopted toward witnesses contrasts dramatically with what we see from Grajal, Gudiel, and Martínez.

Remarkably, however, Fray Luis aimed the full force of his rhetorical venom at the inquisitors themselves, accusing them of ignorance, laziness, and incompetence. León’s complaints about general delays were mentioned above, but as the trial wore on, he began accusing Valladolid officials of dereliction of duty, or even of deliberately impeding his defense. For example, when months had gone by since his arrest without the publication of witness testimony (*Publicación de testigos*),<sup>81</sup> he contended that the delay was not merely nettlesome, but was harming his defense: “el daño que yo recibo en no aver publicacion de testigos es notorio y para la dilacion della no parece aver causa razonable” (the injury

<sup>79</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 226.

<sup>80</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 278–79.

<sup>81</sup> Regarding the *Publicación de testigos*, under the 1561 Inquisitorial protocols, local inquisitors were ordered, “no tengan suspensos a los reos mucho tiempo” (do not keep the prisoners in suspense for a long time) (Jiménez Monterín, *Introducción* [see note 13], 213), but Fray Luis’s case demonstrates how broadly that vague guideline was interpreted.

I receive through there being no publication of witnesses is obvious, and there does not seem to be any reasonable cause for the delay).<sup>82</sup> As his imprisonment approached the one-year mark, he reiterated this complaint:

haze un año que estoy en esta carcel en todo el qual tiempo Vs. mds. no an sido servidos hazer publicacion de testigos en my negocio, ny darme lugar de entera defensa, con manifesto daño de mi persona y justicia y sin parecer que para ello ay causa ninguna juridica ny razonable.

[I have been in this jail for a year, in all which time your graces have not been so good as to provide the publication of witnesses in my trial, nor to give me an opportunity to defend myself fully, with obvious injury to my person and my innocence, and without there appearing to be any legal or reasonable cause for it.]<sup>83</sup>

Fray Luis's protestations of unjust treatment also included numerous complaints about pieces of evidence that inquisitors neglected to obtain on his behalf.<sup>84</sup> In one such case, in a written statement submitted in December of 1572, denouncing a delay in bringing some teaching notes from his cell, we see a typical example of his pugnacity:

desde la primera audiencia que fue por principio de abril deste presente año hasta el fin del mes de noviembre por muchas vezes por palabras y por escrito como parecerá por el processo e supplicado a Vs. mds. manden buscar unas conclusiones mias que estan entre mis papeles y comprobar que son mias [...]. Y con ser esto asi por el fin del dicho mes de noviembre las dichas conclusiones como Vs. mds. saben ny se avian buscado ny comprobado.

[since the first audience, which was near the beginning of April of the current year, until the end of November, I have requested many times both orally and in writing, as will be seen in the trial, that your graces order that some conclusions from among my papers be brought in order to verify that they are mine [...]. And even so, by the end of the said month of November the said conclusions, as your graces know, have neither been brought nor verified.<sup>85</sup>

Later in the trial, his fulminations against the ineptitude of inquisitors became even more caustic. At one point, he accused them of refusing to see the truth.<sup>86</sup> He also railed against the theological experts the Inquisition called on to render opinions on his orthodoxy:

es notorio que el dicho censor o censores o son enemigos mios o son muy ignorantes o son hombres sospechosos en la fe y herejes. [...] no se puede presumir de hombres que se llaman theologos que hierran por ignorancia en cosas tan claras.

<sup>82</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 162.

<sup>83</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 197.

<sup>84</sup> For example, Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 167, 301, 342, 364, 375, 395, 397, 452–53, 462–63.

<sup>85</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 161.

<sup>86</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 396.

[it is obvious that the scholar or scholars either are my enemies, or are very ignorant, or are suspect regarding the faith and heretics [...], and one cannot consider men theologians who go astray through ignorance of such plain matters.]<sup>87</sup>

Fray Luis's complaints of delay increased in the summer of 1574. When the Holy Office prepared to appoint a theological expert to advise him, the accused objected to how his patron was chosen.<sup>88</sup> When a suitable person was finally selected, Fray Luis complained that the patron was not being attentive to his defense, even going so far as to accuse the patron of deliberately stalling.<sup>89</sup> The secretary recorded in one hearing, "ha dos meses que continuamente pide audiencia con el y nunca se le ha dado" (For two months he has been continuously trying to obtain an audience with [the patron,] and it has never been granted).<sup>90</sup>

During one six-month period in 1575, he filed seven written complaints, some quite strenuous,<sup>91</sup> in response to a startling development in the proceedings: when the court-appointed theologian finally submitted his finding, formally endorsing Fray Luis's teachings, the Inquisition decided to solicit opinions from several others. Since it took nearly a year for the first theologian to be selected and then to tender his opinion, it is easy to understand León's outrage at the notion of doing it all over again with a committee. The protests he submitted in the summer of 1575 once again highlight the contrast in tone between Fray Luis's statements and those of the other three prisoners. For instance, in May of that year, when he first learned of the plan to solicit input from other authorities, he asserted that doing so "sera solamente dilaçion para que este negoçio nunca tenga fin" (will simply be a delay, such that this matter will never be concluded), and went on to beg,

pide y supplica que sean servidos de estar y examinar este negoçio y acavalle de una vez atento que a tres años que está aqui sin culpa ninguna y que pongan delante de los ojos a Dios y a la quenta que se la a de dar"

[he requests and pleads that [inquisitors] be so good as to examine this matter and conclude it once and for all, noting that for three years the accused has been here without any sort of guilt, and that they place before their eyes God and the account they will have to give to him.]<sup>92</sup>

A mere two days later, he again formally objected to the new round of vetting his doctrine, pleading with inquisitors, "en el dicho nuevo examen que Vs. mds.

<sup>87</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 431.

<sup>88</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 451.

<sup>89</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 485–86, 488–90, 490–91.

<sup>90</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 489.

<sup>91</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 491, 493, 548, 558, 563–65, 567, 598–600.

<sup>92</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 548.

hazen recibo notable agravio y dilatan Vs. mds. la conclusion de my pleito y my prision sin causa ninguna juridica” (in the new consultation you are commencing, I am receiving notable injury and you are delaying the conclusion of my case and my imprisonment without any legal cause).<sup>93</sup> This statement also pointedly reminded officials of their ethical and legal obligations:

no quieran con dilaciones y examenes escusados y en ninguna manera necesarios ocuparse a si y atormentarme a my. Porque ansi como Vs. mds. no pueden sin grave ofensa de Dios prender sin causa, ansi ny mas ny menos no pueden dilatar la prision, ny un dia sin causas muy jurídicas y muy necesarias.

[do not desire, through delays and inquests that are useless and in no way necessary, to busy yourselves and torment me. Because just as your graces cannot, without grave offense to God, arrest anyone without just cause, in the exact same way you cannot delay my release even one day except for very legal and necessary reasons.]<sup>94</sup>

In the same document, Fray Luis even went so far as to allege that the renewed scrutiny of his orthodoxy must have been prompted by personal malice on the part of inquisitors:

es notorio y evidente que del dicho examen no puede resultar culpa contra my, [...] y que por consiguiente se haze sin causa y sin efecto, mas de alargar my prision y querer acabarme la vida porque me hallan sin culpa.

[it is obvious and evident that from the said examination no guilt of mine can result, [...] and therefore it is being done for no reason, except to extend my imprisonment and to try to end my life because you find me innocent.]<sup>95</sup>

This protest concluded,

supplico a V. mds. y les encargo las consciencias que sean servidos de no dar lugar a mas dilaciones en este negocio, sino que le concluyan con brevedad attento al mucho tiempo que a que estoy aqui”

[I plead with your graces and call on your consciences to be so good as to not permit any more delays in this matter, but to conclude it promptly, given the long time that I have been here.]<sup>96</sup>

Finally in this context, we may note a longer and even more vigorous protest he drafted in September of that year, in which he flatly stated,

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<sup>93</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 563.

<sup>94</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 564.

<sup>95</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 563.

<sup>96</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 565.

e defendido y mostrado que mi doctrina es sana sufficientissimamente, y que Vs mds. deven declararme por libre y restituirme en my estado primitivo, satisfaciendose con la claridad que tienen de mi justicia.

[I have argued and demonstrated that my doctrine is more than sufficiently wholesome, and that your graces ought to declare me free and restore me to my prior state, satisfying yourselves with the proof that you have of my righteousness.]<sup>97</sup>

Toward the end of the document, he again emphasized,

la prision de tantos dias que e padecido y padezco y los trabajos que e pasado en ella por el desacomodo en muchas cosas que e tenido, por my natural flaqueza y enfermedad, a sido un tormento tan largo, y tan duro y tan cruel que bastara para purgar todas las sospechas dél mucho por muy fundadas que fueran.

[the extended imprisonment I have suffered and suffer and the trials I have experienced therein due to the many inconveniences I have endured, and due to my natural weakness and sickness, has been such a long, hard, and cruel torment, that it would be enough to purge all suspicions, however well founded they might be.]<sup>98</sup>

Later, when the new doctrinal review board was appointed despite his protestations, he lambasted the ecclesiastical specialists on whom the Inquisition relied. As the committee's opinions began trickling in over the succeeding months, and they continued to ask for more details on Fray Luis' teachings, the accused lamented, "son cosas tan llanas que es cosa de gran lastima que en juicio tan grave aya consultores theologos que noten cosas semejantes, y se tengan por theologos" (these matters are so plain, that it is a great shame that in such a serious case there are theological consultants who object to such things, and consider themselves theologians).<sup>99</sup>

What is notable in these statements is how the accused openly challenged the qualifications of inquisitors, and questioned their fitness for the offices they held; further, it is striking how he argued that the delays he experienced were not merely inconvenient, but constituted a grave miscarriage of justice. The defiant, accusatory tone Fray Luis adopted toward inquisitors demonstrates a stark contrast with the comparatively compliant posture that Grajal, Martínez, and Gudiel adopted.

## Conclusion

In summation, then, unlike his three fellow inmates, Fray Luis vigorously protested his own innocence and objected to delays, aggressively denounced hostile

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<sup>97</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 598.

<sup>98</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 600.

<sup>99</sup> Alcalá, *Proceso* (see note 5), 598.

witnesses, and even accused the inquisitors themselves of theological ignorance, of dereliction of duty, and of treating him unjustly. The volume and vehemence of his complaints is especially remarkable in contrast with the relative meekness displayed by Grajal, Gudiel and Martínez. Though they were arrested near the same time as Fray Luis, were professors like him, and were housed in the same inquisitorial jail in Valladolid, none displayed the kind of bellicose tenacity that we observe in Fray Luis. None responded so forcefully to accusations lodged against them, none complained so vociferously or so frequently about delays and neglect, and certainly none even approached Fray Luis's assertive, often belligerent tone toward inquisitors.

In light of the relationship between personality type and trauma survival that has been highlighted in this study, it seems incontrovertible that Fray Luis's persistence and emotional resilience significantly contributed to his surviving close to five years in solitary confinement. Though clearly the sickliest of the group when they were arrested, he alone not only endured the rigors of the trial, but later grew in social standing and in literary prominence after his release. In fact, most of the works for which he is now famous were composed during or after his trial.

The Spanish-language treatise on the *Song of Solomon* that contributed to his arrest was never published in his lifetime, but he authored two major doctrinal works in Spanish that were published in multiple printings that Fray Luis personally oversaw.<sup>100</sup> In contrast, Gudiel and Grajal perished in jail, while Martínez, though he survived, authored no known works after his release.

Research on trauma and recovery suggests that Fray Luis's robust personality contributed to his survival and subsequent literary productivity. In trying circumstances, Kobasa explains that hardy persons view themselves as "not just [victims] of a threatening change, but [active determinants] of the consequences it brings about."<sup>101</sup> Similarly, Lazarus and Folkman argue that in general, the belief that one can influence one's circumstances helps relieve stress,<sup>102</sup> and certainly Fray Luis's numerous protests indicate he believed it was in his power to sway prison officials and influence his situation. Indeed, as Wadsworth, DeCarlo Santiago, and Einhorn explain, "Taking steps to solve the problem [...] [is] associated

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**100** His first published works, which appeared in 1580, were in Latin: *In Cantica Canticorum Salomonis explanatio*, and *In Psalmum vigesimuym sextum explanatio*. Three years later, he published two influential works in Spanish: *De los nombres de Cristo* and *La perfecta casada*. Both Spanish volumes saw multiple printings during Fray Luis's lifetime; he also added new material to successive editions of *Nombres*. See Dana C. Bultman, "Fray Luis de León," *Sixteenth-Century Spanish Writers*, ed. Gregory B. Kaplan, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 318 (Detroit, New York, et al.: Thomson Gale, 2006), 138–46; here 144.

**101** Kobasa, "Stressful Life Events" (see note 31), here 9.

**102** Lazarus and Folkman, *Stress* (see note 38), 64–72, 159–60.

with better short and long-term functioning following a disaster.”<sup>103</sup> Fray Luis’s tenacious interactions with the Spanish Inquisition reveal the very kind of hardy character that has been shown to contribute to higher rates of survival and recovery from trauma. In this way, his resilient personality enabled Fray Luis not just to endure, but to thrive when he was forbidden to travel and space was severely restricted.

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103 Wadsworth, DeCarlo Santiago, and Einhorn, “Coping” (see note 35), 416.



María Dolores Morillo

# Mobility, Space and the *Pícaro*'s Identity in Alonso de Salas Barbadillo's *La hija de Celestina*

## Travel and the Picaresque Genre

In the literatures of the Iberian Peninsula, as in most of the Western literary canon, travel has always been a rich, fruitful, and protean topic. As many of the essays included in this volume on travel demonstrate, the journey can be interpreted in a variety of ways: as a metaphor for human life, in which the individual is seen as a *homo viator*, as in Jorge Manrique's *Coplas a la muerte de su padre* (fifteenth century); or it can be a *peregrinatio spiritualis* like Teresa de Ávila's *Camino de perfección* (1510). Travel can also be understood as a painful task (*travail*), hence the connection between the voyage and the pilgrimage. Iberian medieval hagiographic literature is peppered with pilgrim stories due to the popularity of the *Camino de Santiago*, as evidenced by the *Codex Calixtinus*, Gonzalo de Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* and *Vida de San Millán*, the "Poema de Fernán González," and the "Poema de Alfonso XI," to name a few.

Parallel to this European Christian pilgrimage tradition, there is the Islamic tradition to travel to Mecca, and the Jewish counterpart to the Holy Land. In the twelfth century, a new genre emerges from Western Muslim quills (Muslims from Al-Andalus and Morocco) named the *rihla* or travel narrative.<sup>1</sup> Framed in this tradition are *Las coplas del Peregrino de Puey Monçon*, a pilgrim's story that conveys to the reader the grandiosity of Islam and the wonders of the Muslim religion.<sup>2</sup>

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1 See the contribution to this volume by Sally Abed examining the *rihla* by Ibn Fadlan.

2 This case of pilgrim narrative poetry is quite singular, for it is an *aljamiado* text, which means it was written in Castilian with Arabic characters, a common practice among fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spanish Moriscos. It was found in the last century in the town of Almonacid de la Sierra (Zaragoza, Spain) buried in a wall, next to one hundred forty-two other books and manuscripts, most of them *aljamiados*, that belonged to a Morisco bookmaker, who due to the expulsion in 1609, might have hid his books and tools, in hopes of returning someday. See Ramón Zúñiga López, "Las coplas del Alhichante de Puey Monçon," *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabigos y Hebreos* 37–38 (1988–1989): 449–79; here 451–54; online at: <http://meahhebreo.com/index.php/meahhebreo/article/view/553/563> (last accessed on Feb. 28, 2018).

On the other hand, as Luigi Monga points out, “even the purifying travel is not without aberrations, for pilgrimages *per se* do not make people holy” (13–14).<sup>3</sup> This is the case of Gonzalo de Berceo’s tongue-in-cheek miracle VII, “El romero engañado por el enemigo malo”.<sup>4</sup> In this miracle, Berceo presents a friar who lays with a woman on the eve of his pilgrimage to the city of Santiago de Compostela. This act sullies him, rendering him unworthy of such a holy journey. Next, the devil appears along the way to take him with him to hell for having sinned. The devil tricks the pilgrim into cutting his penis off and slicing his throat open, truly condemning himself this time for having committed a mortal sin: suicide. However, the Virgin Mary and the Apostle Santiago intercede for him and save him, not without a catch: the pilgrim comes back to life penis-less.

Similarly, in Francisco López de Úbeda’s picaresque novel *La pícara Justina* (1605), Justina fashions herself as a *pícara romera* or pilgrim rogue in book two. This apparently oxymoronic title should not surprise the reader – it certainly did not alarm the seventeenth-century reader. As Enriqueta Zafra has recently demonstrated, in seventeenth-century Spain the mainstream discourse about pilgrims and women who traveled likened them to prostitutes.<sup>5</sup> Zafra provides a series of popular sayings and refrains gathered in Gonzalo Correas’s *Vocabulario de refranes* (1627), which commonly associated loose women with whores: “Ir romera y volver ramera” and “Moza muy disantera, o gran romera o gran ramera.”<sup>6</sup> This misogynistic discourse reveals a general sense of uneasiness and anxiety toward women who travel for unjustified reasons, that is, not for family or urgent matters.

And this can be due in part to the fact that travel had traditionally been a male activity. Ulysses abandons Ithaca to travel the world, leaving Penelope behind to guard the home.<sup>7</sup> Monga refers to this male perspective of the journey as “the phallic voyage” (29). For it is a different story when it is women who are doing the wandering:

3 Luigi Monga, “Travel and Travel Writing: An Historical Overview of Hodoeporics,” *Annali d’Italianistica* 14 (1996): 6–54; here 13–14.

4 Gonzalo de Berceo, *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, ed. Michael Gerli (Madrid: Cátedra, 2006), 103–09.

5 Enriqueta Zafra, “‘Ir romera y volver ramera’: Las pícaras romeras/rameras y el discurso del viaje en el *Libro de entretenimiento de la pícara Justina*,” *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 39.2 (Invierno 2015): 483–503; here 483.

6 Gonzalo Correas, *Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales ... 1627* (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de Jaime Ratés, 1906), 129 and 469. See also online at: <https://archive.org/details/vocabularioderef00corruoft> (last accessed on Feb. 25, 2018).

7 I will return to Penelope, the “femenine” spaces and the female rogue Elena later on.

Helen going to Troy, Medea fleeing with Jason, and Ariadne with Theseus. Away from home, men encounter 'other' women, alluring and/or menacing, seductive and/or castrating: Nausicaa, Circe, Dido, islands with beguiling feminine names ... that lure the unattached traveler into exotic and erotic games. (30)<sup>8</sup>

This "phallic" quality of the voyage can be seen in the *Cantar de Mio Cid*, the anonymous Castilian medieval epic poem, in which Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, the hero, is expelled from the kingdom, and leaves his wife and daughters in a convent until he returns from war against the Moors with his honor restored. But, what happens when it is a woman who fights for her country? She is usually seen as a monster, an aberration, or, in order to avoid that, is forced to hide her gender. In *The Memoirs of the Lieutenant Nun, Catalina de Erauso* (1625), Catalina cross-dresses as a man to travel to the New World and fight for Spain. She even dares to request from the pope a pension for having served her country and her faith. These other types of women (soldiers, warriors, explorers, missionaries) often adopt "a position of gender ambiguity, taking on the 'masculine' virtues of strength, initiative and decisiveness while retaining the less aggressive qualities considered appropriate to their own sex."<sup>9</sup> This was largely true in part due to the commonly stereotyped image of women as "inherent homekeepers" portrayed in most Spanish (and European) Renaissance texts, such as Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* (1583) or Luis Vives's *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana* (1523).

However, it is well-known that contrary to the general instruction described in popular sayings, handbooks of female conduct and other official documents, early modern women were not as homebound as it was made believed. In her study "El caso de las 'mujeres sueltas'" (2014), Enriqueta Zafra presents two cases of real women who joined the military and traveled all over the Spanish Empire: famous Spanish courtesan Isabella de Luna and "lieutenant nun" Catalina de Erauso. The predominant male discourse established that a woman's place should be the home and warned that traveling put a woman's virtue at risk. However, as Zafra points out, these two women are far from being domestic and stationary, and, what is more important, they show two different facets of the role women played in the Spanish troops: Isabella de Luna provides sexual services to the soldiers, while Catalina de Erauso seeks to participate and engage in war without exploiting her sexuality.<sup>10</sup> There was also the phenomenon of

<sup>8</sup> Monga, "Travel" (see note 3).

<sup>9</sup> Shirley Foster, *Across New Worlds: Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers and Their Writings* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Enriqueta Zafra, "El caso de las 'mujeres sueltas': Isabella de Luna, prostituta en el ejército imperial y cortesana Española en Roma, y la Monja Alférez, Catalina de Erauso," *Hispanic Review* 82 (Autumn 2014): 487–504; here 487–88.

women pilgrims, such as Margery Kempe (ca. 1373–ca. 1438), and Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza (1566–1614), a Spanish noble woman turned religious activist and martyr, who gave up her aristocratic life in Spain and traveled to Protestant England to defend the Catholic faith. However, these women were more the exception than the rule.<sup>11</sup>

In this vein, this chapter will explore how in Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo's novel, *La hija de Celestina* (1612), the author's discourse echoes the existing belief that there was something sinister and toxic about women wanderers, and that they posed a danger to society, such as this sententious declaration demonstrates: "El que mal vive no tiene ni casa ni ciudad permanente" (105, he who leads a bad life, has no home and no city to call his own). With this warning, the implicit author/narrator of *La hija de Celestina* admonishes and condemns the *pícara*'s morally reprehensible conduct as a loose woman. For Salas Barbadillo and many of his contemporaries, a woman on the loose is a rolling stone, and as the saying goes, "a rolling stone gathers no moss."<sup>12</sup> This reference to those who are always moving is clearly connected with the inability to put down roots in one place and avoiding responsibilities, such as Elena, the *pícara* protagonist, will demonstrate. Salas Barbadillo's *pícara* Elena is someone for whom travel is not an interior or cleansing journey, but an opportunity for lucrative and criminal activities.

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**11** See the contribution to this volume by Lia Ross. Women who could not go on a pilgrimage, such as nuns, resorted to proxy pilgrimage accounts, such as by Felix Fabri (*Sionspilger*, 1492); see the contribution to this volume by Gavin Fort. See also Albrecht Classen, "Imaginary Experience of the Divine: Felix Fabri's *Sionspilger* – Late-Medieval Pilgrimage Literature as a Window into Religious Mentality," *Studies in Spirituality* 15 (2005): 109–28. For further reading on Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, see Nieves Romero-Díaz, "Women, Space and Power in Early Modern Spain: Luisa de Carvajal y María de Guevara," *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 11.2 (2017): 42–58; and Anne J. Cruz, *The Life and Writings of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza. Autobiography, Poetry, Correspondence*, ed. and trans. Anne J. Cruz. The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series, 29 (Toronto: Iter Press/Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2014).

**12** There is an equivalent in Spanish that employs the same botanical analogy: "piedra move-diza nunca moho la cobija." This saying appears in chapter XV of Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina* (1499). After Celestina's death, Elicia decides to stay in Celestina's house (brothel) to ensure a roof over her head and a job: "que mudar costumbre es a par de muerte, y piedra movediza que nunca moho la cobija" (301). See Fernando de Rojas, *La Celestina*, ed. Dorothy Severin (Madrid: Cátedra, 1995). For more information on the loose woman in early modern Spain, see Enriqueta Zafra's exhaustive and important studies: "'Piedra rodadera no es buena para cimientó': el caso de la pícara Lozana y otras mujeres 'sue-ltas' de la época," *Lemir* 19 (2015): 177–202, and the above cited "El caso de las 'mujeres sueltas'" (see note 10).

Her constant wandering as a means to make a living by scamming the rich and, subsequently, running away from justice, in conjunction with her lack of belonging to a specific place conform the identity of the *pícaro* as dangerous, phallic, and emasculating. This lack of conformity to other somewhat accepted forms of “feminine travel” causes Elena to be the target of Salas’s criticism and punishment of the loose, free, uncontrollable woman she embodies. Thus, the discourse created by the implicit author or narrator will impose a punishment to contain her forever and reduce her to a confined space: her death by *encubamiento* as a *vindicta pública*, consisting of placing her dead body in a barrel and throwing it into the river. This severe sentence symbolically seeks to control and stop the constant wandering and uncontrollable personality of the *pícaro* or the loose woman.

In the picaresque literary tradition, the *pícaro* is usually an orphan who roams the streets begging for food and/or money, serves numerous masters, and travels from city to city in search of good fortune. In some cases, such as *Lazarillo de Tormes*, this journey can be interpreted as an inverse *Bildungsroman*, for there is no spiritual growth. In fact, the more material growth there is, the more compromised the *pícaro*’s spirit and morality get. However, if the *pícaro* is the one doing the wandering, the stealing and the scheming, the social order does not get altered, and nobody needs to die a public and cruel death in order for the authorities to send an exemplary message to society.

In the case of picaresque novels that have a female protagonist, a *pícaro* is already a debased character due to her feminine condition. In *La hija de Celestina*, Elena is doubly marginalized and used as an exemplary tale because she, as a foot-loose woman, symbolically descends from a long lineage of bad women: those from the *celestinesque* tradition.<sup>13</sup>

## The Question of the Existence of a Female Picaresque Genre

Alonso de Salas Barbadillo’s novel *La hija de Celestina* (*Celestina’s Daughter* or *Celestina’s Spawn*) was first published in Madrid in 1612. Two years later, it was expanded, re-edited, and published by the author under the name *La ingeniosa*

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<sup>13</sup> This label encompasses novels that have a female character who shares some characteristics with the famous *Celestina*, the bawd, sourcerer and go-between created by Fernando de Rojas (see note 12).

*Elena* (*The Ingenious Elena*).<sup>14</sup> This novel can be considered a picaresque novel or, at least, to contain a clearly picaresque female protagonist. But before we delve into the idiosyncrasies and problematics of the *female* picaresque genre, we must first define the picaresque genre.

Howard Mancing's definition of the picaresque seems especially fit, for it focuses on the protean quality of the genre, which, I believe, can be applied to *La hija de Celestina*. According to Mancing, "[a] picaresque novel is a text in which a major character is a *pícaro* who usually tells the story of his or her own life; the text always displays some degree of generic self-consciousness; it is a protean form."<sup>15</sup> I particularly like Mancing's deference to include the double pronoun "his or her" because it is inclusive of the female *pícaro*, instead of exclusive, as many scholars are prone to.

It is by now widely accepted that the first picaresque novel, precursor and prototype of what will later be the picaresque genre, is *La vida de Lázaro de Tormes y de sus fortunas y adversidades* (*The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes; his fortunes and misfortunes told by himself*). Penned by an anonymous author, although there are several theories about whom the author could have been, *Lazarillo de Tormes* was published in 1554 in Alcalá de Henares, Burgos y Medina del Campo, and in Antwerp in 1555.<sup>16</sup> In 1559, *Lazarillo de Tormes* was banned and included in the *Index of Forbidden Books* by the Spanish Crown. From 1573 until 1844, the censored version by López de Velasco, which omitted *Tratados* (chapters) 4 and 5 and various paragraphs from other parts of the book, was the only one allowed to circulate in Spain. This version is known as *Lazarillo castigado*.<sup>17</sup>

The second picaresque novel is considered to be Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, published in two parts: the first one in Madrid in 1599, and the second one in Lisbon in 1604. In 1621, it was translated into English by James Mabbe as *The Rogue or the Life of Guzman de Alfarache*. The popularity that the two parts of Mateo Alemán's novel garnered has led to consider it as the consolidation of the picaresque genre, for, among other reasons, it was the first time

<sup>14</sup> Since there are no English translations of these two novels, an unofficial translation of the titles is offered here.

<sup>15</sup> Howard Mancing, "The Protean Picaresque," *The Picaresque. Tradition and Displacement*, ed. Giancarlo Maiorino (Minneapolis, MN, and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 273–91; here 281.

<sup>16</sup> The latest hypothesis about the authorship of *Lazarillo* can be found in Rosa Navarro Durán's edition: Alfonso de Valdés, *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes, y de sus fortunas y adversidades*, ed. Rosa Navarro Durán (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2016). Her findings point to Alfonso de Valdés as the true author of *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes, y de sus fortunas y adversidades* (1554).

<sup>17</sup> For more on *Lazarillo castigado*, see Reyes Coll-Tellechea, '*Lazarillo castigado*': *historia de un olvido. Muerte y resurrección de Lázaro (1559–1573–1844)* (Madrid: Ediciones del Orto, 2010).

the main character was termed *pícaro*. Francisco Quevedo follows suit with *La vida del buscón llamado don Pablos*, published in 1626 in Zaragoza, although there are other novels published in-between these two works. Consequently, I will refer to these three as the main pillars of the early stages of the (male) picaresque genre.

Notable differences aside, there are common aspects that all three novels share, the main one being the *pícaro*, the male protagonist who tells the story of his life starting from his birth. This male protagonist is from the lowest class and of poor and base origin, for he usually comes from a family of *conversos* or *Moriscos* (converted Jews or Muslims, respectively), therefore his blood is not pure, according to early modern Spain's *estatutos de limpieza sangre* (purity of blood laws).<sup>18</sup> The *pícaro* resorts to lies, deception, tricks and theft in order to survive or prosper; he suffers hunger, violence, and abuse, and is constantly on the move, changing masters, jobs, and trades (hence the previous definition of the Protean aspect of the genre). The picaresque novel presents a strong criticism of the clergy and the *hidalgos* (the low nobility), as well as a portrait of the new emerging urban classes. The male picaresque criticizes social attitudes toward the poor and parodies the exploits of the knight-errant by inverting the image of the archetypal hero into the amoral *pícaro*.<sup>19</sup>

Many scholars have debated about the existence of a 'female picaresque' genre, in which are typically included Francisco Delicado's *La lozana andaluza* (1528), Francisco López de Úbeda's *La pícaro Justina* (1605), Alonso de Salas Barbadillo's *La hija de Celestina* (1612), and, with more hesitation, Alonso de Castillo Solórzano's *Las Harpías en Madrid* (1633), and *La niña de los embustes, Teresa de Manzanares* (1634). Although there are still mixed "verdicts" on the existence of a female picaresque genre, one thing is undeniable, and it is that these works have more similarities in common than differences.<sup>20</sup> Firstly, their main

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**18** Purity of blood was an obsession that originated in the fifteenth century. Old Christians "of pure blood" considered New Christians impure and therefore morally inadequate to be members of their communities. This judgment was primarily applied to the politically and economically influential group of Iberian *conversos* (Catholics of Jewish origin) but was extended also to *Moriscos* (Catholics of Muslim lineage) throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

**19** Anne J. Cruz, *Discourses of Poverty: Social Reform and the Picaresque Novel in Early Modern Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 136.

**20** For a comprehensive overview of the different perspectives and opinions on this debate, see: Thomas Hanrahan, *La mujer en la novela picaresca* (Madrid: Porrúa Turanzas, 1967); Daniel Eisenberg, "Does the Picaresque Novel Exist?" *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 26 (1979): 203–19; Marcia Wells, "The Pícaro: Towards Female Autonomy, or the Vanity of Virtue," *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 33 (1986): 63–70; Peter Dunn, *Spanish Picaresque Fiction: A New Literary History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Anne J. Cruz, *Discourses of Poverty: Social Reform*

character is a female rogue, a *pícaro*, who travels and moves around throughout the Iberian geography (and also beyond the Mediterranean Sea): Lozana travels by boat to Rome, Justina is a self-proclaimed *pícaro montañesa* and *pícaro* romera (mountain rogue and pilgrim rogue), and through Elena's life journey the reader can get a glimpse of the criminal underworlds of Madrid and Seville. Secondly, these *pícaras* share a common literary origin or "mother": Fernando de Rojas' *Celestina*, the (in)famous go-between, former prostitute, procuress, virginity mender and sorceress (among other professions) in his dialogued novel *La trágicomedia de Calixto y Melibea* (1499), which has come to be mainly known and referred to as *La Celestina* – such is the prominence of this character in the novel. As Anne J. Cruz states, "the female picaresque novels all acknowledge their debt to the *Celestina* by making repeated references to the primary text".<sup>21</sup> In the case of *La lozana andaluza*, Lozana's house is inscribed as the place where "aquí idolatró Calisto, aquí no se estima Melibea, aquí poco vale Celestina."<sup>22</sup> The references to the three main characters of *La Celestina* are meant to praise Lozana's house of pleasure, as a far better brothel than Celestina's ever was, which in turn makes Lozana a very good pupil of Celestina, so much so that she surpasses the "teacher." In *La pícaro Justina*, Justina urges the reader to listen to the adventures of a second, more debased, Celestina: "Escucha, y oirás las hazañas de otra Celestina a lo mecánico" (373, Listen, and you will hear the deeds of another Celestina).<sup>23</sup> In *La pícaro Justina*, there are many references to Celestina, but this one is especially relevant because in this chapter Justina talks about her parents, thus connecting her maternal lineage to that of Celestina's. Salas Barbadillo's

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and the Picaresque Novel in Early Modern Spain (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Janine Montauban, *El ajuar de la vida picaresca: reproducción, genealogía y sexualidad en la novela picaresca española* (Madrid: Visor, 2003); Antonia Petro, "Sexo y mañas: la supervivencia de las pícaras," *Hispanic Journal* 26.1–2 (2005): 35–50; Reyes Coll-Tellechea, *Contra las normas: las pícaras españolas (1605–1632)*, (Madrid: Ediciones del Orto, 2005); Klaus Meyer-Minnemann, "El género de la novela picaresca," *La novela picaresca: concepto genérico y evolución del género (siglos XVI y XVII)*, ed. Klaus Meyer-Minnemann and Sabine Schlickers (Pamplona, Frankfurt a. M., and Madrid: Universidad de Navarra, Vervuert, Iberoamericana, 2008), 13–40; Enriqueta Zafra, *Prostituidas por el texto: discurso prostibulario en la picaresca femenina* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2009); Juan Antonio Garrido Ardila, *La novela picaresca en Europa, 1554–1753* (Madrid: Visor, 2010); Enrique García Santo-Tomás, "The Spanish Female Picaresque," *The Picaresque Novel in Western Literature: From the Sixteenth Century to the Neopicaresque*, ed. J. A. Garrido Ardila (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 60–74.

<sup>21</sup> Cruz, *Discourses* (see note 19), 157.

<sup>22</sup> Francisco Delicado, *La lozana andaluza*, ed. Bruno Damiani (Madrid: Clásicos Castalia, 1984), 155. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>23</sup> Francisco López de Úbeda, *La pícaro Justina*, ed. David Mañero Lozano (Madrid: Cátedra, 2012), 373.



*La hija de Celestina* makes clear from the title the genealogical relation between Elena, her mother Zara and the literary Celestina, as it will be discussed later on.

Lastly, as the frequent connections with Celestina clearly establish, the *pícaro* is irremediably associated with lasciviousness, prostitution, and avarice; is marginalized due to her base origin and/or ethnic background (converted Jews or Moors) and therefore is exoticized because of it. There other categories that can be argued to be traits shared by the *pícaras*, although these three will serve as good examples of the female picaresque paradigm.

As mentioned above, this corpus of novels with a female protagonist o *pícaro* finds its model in the already debased female characters of Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina*. All of these novels incorporate a lower-class, poor female protagonist, who exhibits early-age promiscuity, suffers social marginalization (due to her Moorish or Jewish convert lineage), deviates from "decent" society, and enjoys sexual freedom. It is safe to assume that it is due to the male authors' polarized vision of women as either "good" or "bad" depicted in their novels that all literary *pícaras* turn to prostitution at some point.<sup>24</sup> According to Reyes Coll-Tellechea, the female picaresque novel is the product of the discourse against the free or loose woman, for she is considered a threat to the social order. Thus, the function of the novel is to contain that potentially destabilizing force.<sup>25</sup> Thus, *La hija de Celestina* exemplifies how early modern women who broke the boundaries of the spatial constraints established by the ruling power became subjected to criticism and served as a cautionary tale for men and other women.

## ***La hija de Celestina*: "A Rolling Stone Gathers No Moss"**

*La hija de Celestina* starts *in medias res* with the arrival in Toledo of Elena, the protagonist. This is the first of several journeys that will take place throughout the novel, which is divided into 8 chapters, narrated in the third person singular by an omniscient narrator who often times digresses to insert a moral sermon, which could be interpreted as the authoritative author's voice permeating the narration. The plot follows Elena in her continuous movement from city to city to scam new victims: first from Toledo to Madrid, then to Burgos; from there to Seville, and finally to Madrid, where the journey, her life, as well as the novel come to an end.

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<sup>24</sup> Cruz, *Discourses* (see note 19), 141.

<sup>25</sup> Reyes Coll-Tellechea, *Contra las normas: las pícaras españolas (1605–1632)* (Madrid: Ediciones del Orto, 2005), 20.

Elena is a *pícaro morisca*, a Moorish rogue, (who is invariably associated with prostitution) who uses her beguiling beauty and the arts of deception to con and rob rich men. She is usually depicted as irresistible to men because of her “ojos asesinos” (“murdering eyes”), charms, beauty, shrewdness and sexual desire. Unlike other female rogues or *pícaras*, such as Lozana (*La lozana andaluza*) or Justina (*La pícaro Justina*), Elena does not travel or work alone. She has a posse that accompany her in her travels: two male ruffians (Montúfar and a young boy), and an older woman, a former go-between and prostitute, named La Méndez. These three companions are instrumental to making her lies and ruses more convincing; however, Elena is undoubtedly the mastermind of the gang. Montúfar, one of the male companions, is her lover, who will later on become her husband and pimp. The group arrives in Toledo the night before the wedding of a noblewoman from that same city and Don Sancho, the dissolute nephew of an aging nobleman who wants to hastily marry his nephew so that he will stop his scandalous behavior and settle down. Elena and her acolytes proceed to trick the rich old man by passing as a wronged noblewoman and her servants, and accuses Don Sancho of having raped her. As proof of this deed Elena shows him a dagger that she had previously taken from Antonio, a young servant (who in turn had stolen it from the nephew), thus, convincingly passing herself off as a wronged virtuous noblewoman to the uncle.<sup>26</sup> Don Sancho happens to see Elena on the streets and falls desperately in love with her, putting at risk the potential happiness of his marriage with his equal (who, by the way, is never named). Elena flees Toledo with Montúfar and La Méndez through the countryside and are headed to Madrid.

However, when Don Sancho realizes his uncle has been swindled he chases after Elena (although the identity of the thieves is unknown to him). He reaches the coach on the road and sees that the woman he desires is the alleged thief. Elena lies to him and tells him that she is a married woman who lives in Madrid. Don Sancho believes her and the two make arrangements to see each other in Madrid soon. Don Sancho speedily goes to Madrid, where he is made to believe he will meet Elena, but after looking for her for three days, he returns to Toledo, to his wife and uncle. Elena and the others decide to take the road to Burgos instead of Madrid, to avoid Don Sancho. Montúfar falls ill along the journey and the two women decide to abandon him to his own devices and escape from his control. Montúfar gets better and catches up with them; he ties them to a tree, beats them and abandons them in the middle of nowhere.

As fate has it, Don Sancho appears to be in Burgos as well, where his brother is recovering from a near-death illness. The two women see him while they're

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<sup>26</sup> Cruz, *Discourses* (see note 19), 156.

still tied up to the tree, and fear for their plan and their lives if Don Sancho recognizes them. At that moment, Montúfar returns to free them; they make peace and the two women, afraid of Montúfar's wrath, promise never to abandon him. Meanwhile, Don Sancho thinks to have seen Elena, but is called to tend to a brawl between his two drunk servants, and when he comes back to the tree, the vision of Elena is gone. The swindlers get on the road again, leaving Burgos and heading south to Seville, where they live for a few years impersonating a pious and poor family, who exchange devout prayers and fake healing powers for money. They live a pretty comfortable life in Seville: they have plenty of food, material possessions and gold. This good fortune ends eventually and the group is dissolved: Montúfar's ill-temper causes him to beat up their servant, who goes to the police and reveals the truth about the fake pious siblings. La Méndez is apprehended and lashed to death (four hundred lashes), while Elena and Montúfar manage to run away and get on the road – again. This time they travel to Madrid, where they get married and reinvent themselves there: she becomes a prostitute and Montúfar the consenting cuckold who pimps his wife out.

Thus, Madrid, the court, will be the place where they will tragically meet their deaths. Montúfar is consumed by jealousy and beats Elena up when she refuses to ignore the advances of a young tough and takes him as a lover. In revenge, Elena tries to kill Montúfar with poisoned cherries, and, in turn, he tries to kill her with his sword, but her lover, Perico, who is hidden in the room, stabs him to death. Perico is hanged for murder and Elena is accused of parricide and sentenced to death. It is important to notice that in the seventeenth century, parricide could be extended to murdering one's husband, for through matrimony a woman would go from her father's authority to that of her husband's.<sup>27</sup> Her death sentence is *garrote* (strangulation) and *encubamiento* (barreling) in the river Manzanares. According to Uribe-Urán, *encubamiento* was

a technique borrowed from ancient Rome in which culprits were placed alive inside a leather bag (cuba or cuia) with a monkey, a rooster, a snake, and a dog. Once the bag was tightly sealed, the criminals – not being worthy of burial because of the particularly despicable nature of their crime – were dumped in the nearest ocean or river along with their animal companions. The procedure was designed not only to ensure a horrible death but also to erase all material traces of their existence.<sup>28</sup>

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27 Fernando Rodríguez Mansilla, "'Quien bien ata, bien desata': *La hija de Celestina* de Salas Barbadillo," *eHumanista* 6 (2006): 124, accessed on April 10, 2017, <http://www.ehumanista.ucsb.edu/volumes/6>.

28 Victor Uribe-Urán, *Fatal Love: Spousal Killers, Law, and Punishment in the Late Colonial Spanish Atlantic* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 19; online at: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/csufresno/detail.action?docID=4414740> (last accessed on Feb. 28, 2018).

The “Seventh Partida” of the *Siete Partidas*, written by King Alfonso XII the Wise, between 1251–1265, deals with the murder of close kin (offspring, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, parents-in-law, children-in-law, siblings, and spouses), establishing that the culprits should be flogged publicly and then killed. The killing was to be done by *encubamiento*.<sup>29</sup> In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, in an attempt to soften the image of the Crown and the Church, the punishment is lessened:

instead of being placed inside the leather bag alive, culprits were executed first; rather than dumped for good in the ocean or a river without proper burial, after a brief immersion corpses were quickly removed and offered Christian rites.<sup>30</sup>

The punishment inflicted upon Elena strikes the reader of *La hija de Celestina* as exceptionally violent and cruel, for it is rare to find in other picaresque-themed novels, a character, male or female, to suffer a harsh physical punishment, let alone death: Lozana (*La lozana andaluza*) contracts syphilis but is pardoned by the author and moves to Lipari with her lover; Justina (the protagonist of *La pícara Justina*), also affected by the “French maladie” (syphilis), marries Guzmán de Alfarache, the famous literary *pícaro* created by Mateo Alemán, at the end of the fourth and last book; the courtesans in Castillo Solórzano’s *The Harpies in Madrid* are set as an example of the type of women men should avoid, but they are never physically disciplined; María de Zayas castigates harshly both her female and male characters, but there’s no death penalty with such a degree of violence and public shaming for a man or a woman similar to that which Salas Barbadillo chooses for his ingenious Elena.<sup>31</sup>

By punishing Elena to death by strangulation and barreling in her hometown of Madrid (for having killed her spouse, the man who beat her up and lived off of her), I argue that Salas Barbadillo establishes a connection between

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<sup>29</sup> Uribe-Urán (see note 29), 38.

<sup>30</sup> Uribe-Urán (see note 29), 221.

<sup>31</sup> Randall Listerman has reflected upon the cruelty of Elena’s punishment similarly:

The reader is shocked. Somehow one has expected all along that beauty had the power to be pardoned for misdemeanors. It seems there had been a mistake ... A mistake of judgment so final. So cruel. It is only moments later after recovering from the emotion of reading such a horrible ending that the reader perceives what seems like a subconscious whisper emanating from that strict, stark moralist of post-Tridentine Spain – Jerónimo Salas Barbadillo. (56)

That whisper refers to Elena’s failure to learn from her predecessors’ mistakes and lessons, and to the fact that debts must be paid because credit eventually expires. See Randall Listerman, “*La hija de Celestina*: Tradition and Morality,” *The University of South Florida Language Quarterly* XXII.1–2 (1983): 52–56; here 56.

the trajectory of the celestinesque genre (descendants of Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina*) and the pícaro's mobility as a rolling stone, a loose woman, sexualized by her Morisco origin and, therefore, exotic condition, and for her lack of adherence to the feminine spaces and roles predetermined by the dominant patriarchal system. Through the juxtaposition of images and descriptions of the honest, "good" woman, represented in the novel by the Virgin Mary and the women of Toledo, and the loose or "bad" woman (Elena, her mother Zara/María/Celestina, La Méndez), Salas Barbadillo sends a moralizing message by which the reader (mostly a male audience) is warned of the dangers of the latter category of women. Elena as a loose, mobile, uncontainable, unrefrainable woman has no active role in the maintenance and (re)production of the very system that controls her (and women in general). For example, her unregulated sexual activity does not produce descendants, therefore she does not contribute to ensuring the continuation of lineage (family name, origin, blood), or the transference of power and property, as it is expected of the honest woman.

Elena, as Celestina's "daughter," encounters the same fate as her literary progenitor. Celestina is "madre" (mother) to all (as she was commonly referred to), but she never birthed any offspring. However, she "gives birth" to a literary genre and a literary type (the go-between or *alcahueta* type, who is also a sorceress, a former prostitute and bawd), which both seem to culminate in *La hija de Celestina* as a symbolic attempt to kill off the genre and this type of "bad" woman, by means of Elena's public and violent death by *encubamiento*. I argue that it is specifically through this modality of punishment that the system is able to demonstrate its power to confine, enclose and control the loose woman.

The novel starts off with an interesting implicit comparison: the narrator connects the figure of the Virgin Mary and the sinner Elena. From the very beginning, the reader is told that the city of Toledo, in which Elena is just an outsider, is famous for its noble and honest women, good mothers and perfect wives, symbolized in the reference to the Virgin Mary in a baroque, long parenthetical remark aimed at praising Toledo:

A la *imperial* Toledo, gloriosa y antigua ciudad de España, tan gloriosa que la reina a quien hacen corte los serafines la ennobleció con visitarla, dejando por testigo la piedra donde puso sus plantas – a quien la fe y piadosa religión de sus católicos ciudadanos devotamente reverencia –, y tan antigua que la soberbia del romano *Imperio* no la juzgó por indigna de ser asiento de su silla las veces que sus *príncipes* vinieron a España, llegó una mujer llamada Elena .... (83; emphasis is mine)<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> All quotes are from Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo, *La hija de Celestina*, ed. Enrique García Santo-Tomás (1612; Madrid: Cátedra, 2008). All translations from *La hija de Celestina* are my own.

[At the *imperial* Toledo, the glorious and ancient city in Spain, so glorious that the queen, that who is courted by cherubs, honored it with her visit, leaving as a witness the rock where she planted her feet – she, who is devotedly revered by its (Toledo's) faithful and pious catholic citizens – and so ancient that the arrogance of the roman Empire didn't judge it to be unworthy of being the seat of its chair every time its princes came to Spain, arrived a woman named Elena ....]

The “queen courted by cherubs” is the Virgin Mary, who appeared to San Ildefonso in the year 657 C.E., according to the *Acta Sanctorum*. The documents for this apparition describe that Mary, surrounded by virgins singing celestial songs, named San Ildefonso chaplain, vested him with the chasuble, and instructed him to wear it only on the holidays dedicated to honor her.<sup>33</sup> It is important to notice in this initial passage the numerous allusions to the empire and the sovereignty of Christianity and the Catholic faith in order to establish the contrast with Elena's morisco and impure origin, especially since between 1609 y 1613 Phillip III mandated the expulsion of 300.000 Moriscos from Spain. Thus, Mary is the “queen,” Toledo is “imperial,” for it goes back to the Visigoths' period.<sup>34</sup> Salas also includes the roman “princes” who respected the rock on which the Virgin stood during her apparition. The Virgin Mary is the image of feminine perfection, immaculate and free of sin; she is the mother of God and the wife of Joseph.

Moreover, by depicting Mary as “queen,” the association with the Spanish Empire was clear: although an Empire already in decline, this continued to be the way in which Spain wanted to be seen inside and outside its territories at the time the novel was composed. Mary and the Catholic faith connect Toledo and all of its citizens with a τόπος (*topos*), a place of convergence of the concepts of State and Church, power and religion, authority and legitimization: Toledo as the capital of the Holy Roman Empire of Charles V. This strong initial symbolism of the city of Toledo sets the tone for Elena's arrival in the midst of the celebration of the wedding between a young Andalusian nobleman and a young noblewoman from Toledo. This female character will never have a voice in the novel, that is, she will stay silent as it is advisable in the perfect wife. In fact, she acts as the representation of the collectivity of beautiful and virtuous women from Toledo, who metonymically form part of the group of virgins that accompanied Mary in her famous apparition:

<sup>33</sup> García Santo-Tomás (see note 33), 83, n. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Toledo (lat. *Toletum*) was established as the permanent capital of the Visigoths toward the end of king Athanagild's reign (554–567 C.E.). The Visigoths converted to Catholicism in 589, under the reign of king Reccared I (586–601). See Roger Collins, *La España Visigoda. 409–711*, trans. Mercedes García Gamilla (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005), 40.

porque esta felicísima ciudad – llevando a todas las demás de estos reinos la gloria – insignes mujeres, bellas en los cuerpos, discretas en las almas, curiosas en el traje, suaves en la condición, liberales en el ánimo, honestas en el trato; deleitan cuando hablan, suspenden cuando miran, siempre son necesarias y jamás su lado parece inútil. Porque como, demás de la belleza ..., les dio el cielo la alteza de los ingenios ..., es fuerza que en todos tiempos agraden. (86–87)

[because this happy city's – being the most glorious of all in these kingdoms – distinguished women, beautiful in their bodies, discreet in their souls, neat in their garb, soft in their nature, generous in their spirit, honest in their behavior; they please when they speak, they enamor when they look, they always are necessary and their presence never seems useless. And since, beyond beauty ... the heavens gifted them with the nobility of ingenuity ... it is necessary that they always be pleasant.]

Salas is clearly describing the honest woman, the “good” woman, who is an example of obedience, humility, discretion and silence, very much in accordance with Fray Luis de León's handbook of female conduct, *La perfecta casada* (*The perfect wife*).<sup>35</sup> On the happy night with which the novel opens up (the wedding of Don Sancho and the Toledan noble woman), the windows of the houses of Toledo are festively lit both with artificial light and the natural light emanating from the chaste eyes of their female dwellers: again, the “good” noble ladies of Toledo.

To remark hyperbolically on the good nature of these clearly idealized women, the narrator compares their *homes* and the lights of their eyes to the light that illuminated the *chapel* where The Virgin Mary appeared to San Ildefonso, to finalize it with a praise of their near-sanctity quality: “cualquiera de ellas era un seguro competidor del cielo” (any one of them could be a sure competitor of the Heavens, 86). It is absolutely clear that Salas Barbadillo wants to establish a connection between women's virtue and their societal and spatial places, traditionally assigned by the patriarchy, namely, marriage and the home, by almost equating them with the Virgin Mary and the church.

In stark contrast with this type of woman is our protagonist Elena. On the one hand, Elena's eyes are dark, almond-shaped, boastful and criminal (“negros, rasgados, valentones y delincuentes” 85), and are able to kill the men who fall in love with them, as if shipwrecked in the cruel and violent sea of her eyes: “(sus ojos) miraban apacibles a los primeros encuentros, prometiendo serenidad; pero en viendo al miserable amante engolfado en alta mar acometían furiosos, y ...

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<sup>35</sup> Fray Luis de León says: “Porque, así como la naturaleza ... hizo a las mujeres para que encerradas guardasen la casa, así las obligó a que cerrasen la boca” (123–24); (Because as nature ... determined that women should remain enclosed, guarding the home, so it required of them to keep their mouth closed). Fray Luis de León, *La perfecta casada* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1980). For a digital edition, see online at: <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmc0p0w9> (last accessed on Feb. 28, 2018).

daban fin a su vida” (85, [her eyes] serene and peaceful at first, as soon as they could notice the poor lover engulfed in deep sea waters, they charged with fury, and ... put an end to his life).

On the other hand, in order to stress further this stark comparison between the chaste and honorable women of Toledo and Elena the outsider, the narrator employs a double metaphor of the fields (*el campo*) and the dress code (*el vestir*):

en el tiempo en que la primavera anda tan liberal con los campos que a ninguno deja quejoso ni mal vestido, aunque en las galas que les reparte hace de unos a otros diferencia notable. (84)

[In the time when Spring dresses the Earth in her gayest livery, so generously that it (Spring) never lets one go ill-dressed or unhappy, although there is a notable disparity among the pieces with which she gifts each one].

Spring dresses all fields with flowers and fruits, but not in the same fashion; that is: Nature gives to all its creatures but not equally. This inequality clearly references the previously established, simplistic categorization of women in two groups, which the author is undoubtedly subscribing to: the “good” women and the “bad” women. Next, the narrator offers his first description of Elena:

mujer de buena cara y pocos años, que es la principal hermosura, tan sutil de ingenio que era su corazón la recámara de la mentira, donde hallaba siempre el *vestido y traje* más a su propósito conveniente. (84, emphasis is mine).

[She was fair and youthful, which is the greatest of beauties, so subtle in her ingenuity that her heart was the chamber of lies, where she could always find the *dress and disguise* that best fitted her purpose].

These two metaphors imply that God creates all women and He gives all of them gifts and virtues, but not all gifts are the same. That is to say, that not all women have the same nature, nor they use their gifts with the same purpose in mind. It is worth noticing that the most distinctive detail from this description is the abjection that results from Elena’s mutability, which implies a lack of belonging to a place, be it Toledo or anywhere in particular. The mutability of the disguise, the fact that she always finds the best fitting mask (dress), is also linked to her mobility and constant wandering from here to there in search of opportunity, which is where the narrator/implicit author wants to drive the reader’s attention to.

Moreover, Elena possesses yet another characteristic that makes her unfit for this category of good women: her exoticism derived from her base and Morisco origin. In chapter three, when Elena tells Montúfar the story of her life, in a true picaresque fashion, the reader as well as Montúfar learn that her mother was a Moorish slave from Granada (“with iron marks on her face,” 106–07), whose Christian name was María, although she preferred her given muslim name,



Zara.<sup>36</sup> “This statement,” as Electra Gamón points out, “makes reference to the forced conversions of Moriscos. Elena’s mother is forcefully given the Christian name for women *par excellence*: María.”<sup>37</sup> While her mother rejects her Christian name, Elena is rejected by the author by means of a blunt comparison with virtuous female figures such as the Virgin Mary and the Toledan noblewomen.

Elena continues with the story of her origins, and tells how Zara was a servant to a Christian nobleman, and even though some distinguished *caballeros* who were very fond of her could have bought her freedom by marrying her, she refused because it would have meant mixing her blood with theirs. This hatred toward Christians is a direct result of the religious cleansing that had been taking place in Spain since the late fifteenth century: Zara’s parents were jailed, trialed, and sentenced to death (for heresy, as it can be inferred from the text) by the Inquisition in Toledo.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Zara is a clear example of a *morisca* who did not embrace the Christian faith although she did the bare minimum to keep up with the appearances to avoid being accused of heterodoxy. She hated Christians (“ella, que con natural odio heredado de sus mayores, estaba mal con los cristianos,” 108), and swore to never mix her blood with them (with the exception of Galician men – *gallegos* – such as Elena’s father).<sup>39</sup> Zara received her freedom from her mistress before she died, in gratitude for having nursed her daughter back to health when no other wet-nurse or doctor could. This detail of Zara’s life serves Salas to underscore that Zara’s sexual activity is in accordance with the sexual promiscuity associated with *moriscas*.

In connection with Elena’s *otherness*, that is, her mixed blood and Morisco origins, her being an outsider places her on this other different and undesirable category of women. She says she is originally from Madrid, a chaotic city,

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36 Enrique García Santo-Tomás points out that in early seventeenth-century Spain, slaves were marked on the face with a hot iron in the shape of an S with a nail across, that was read as an I, meaning: *sine iure*, or without rights, without freedom (see note 33; here 107, n. 64).

37 Electra Gamón Fielding, “Pícaras, Moriscas and Conversas: The Double-Marginalization of the ‘Oriental Other’ in Spain’s Early Modern Picaresque Novel,” Ph.D. diss., The University of Utah, 2012, 206.

38 “[mi madre] verdad es que cumplía cada año con las obligaciones de la Iglesia, temerosa de estos tres bonetes que dejamos en Toledo, porque de su cárcel salieron a morir mis abuelos” (107). As Enrique García Santo-Tomás points out, the jail of Toledo was notorious for its harshness (see note 33; here 108, n. 66).

39 “except for Galician men, for she thought there was no considerable difference between them and moriscos” (“exceptuando los gallegos, por parecerle que ente ellos los moriscos la diferencia no es considerable,” 108). According to Enrique García Santo-Tomás, with this sentence Salas Barbadillo seems to confirm the bad reputation held by Galicians at the time, as they were considered dirty, malicious, and drunkards, among other things (see note 33; 108, n. 69).

a “maremagno” as Alonso de Castillo Solórzano labeled it in *Las harpías en Madrid*.<sup>40</sup> Madrid, a rapidly growing city and the royal court of king Phillip IV, is where all classes and types coexist. Consequently, the fact that she is not from the illustrious and imperial Toledo (a connection to her lack of lineage and honor), Elena is the opposite of the perfect wife represented in this Toledan Trinity: the Virgin Mary, the noble women of Toledo and don Sancho’s wife.

If previously the narrator had ironically described the space inhabited by Elena as the “chamber of lies,” now he warns the reader of her skills to lie in a series of hyperbolic images and witty personifications related to the feminine and domestic activities such as cleaning, sewing, weaving, fashionable clothing, etc. First, Elena was a person who could go for ten years without telling a single truth, and did not mind Truth not visiting her: “Persona era ella que se pasara diez años sin decir una verdad; y ... nunca la echaba de menos, y vivía muy contenta sin sus visitas” (84). Second, when Elena lied she did so with much cleanliness and tidiness, and as a result, the lies that came out of her mouth were fancily dressed from head to toe: “Cierto que mentía con mucho aseo y limpieza y que salía una bernardina de su boca cubierta de pies a cabeza de tantas galas ...” (84). Whenever she spent one hour gathering her thoughts, she would weave a cloth that would last the entire year (“que en una hora que ella se recogiese con su pensamiento echaba una tela que le duraba todo el año” 84). The narrator concludes this sarcastic rant by asserting that Elena was such a hardworking and industrious homemaker that she never left the loom: “y era tan casera y hacendosa la buena señora, que nunca salía del telar” (84, the emphasis is mine). All of these references to traditionally female-gendered spaces (such as the house, the bedroom, the loom) and chores (like housekeeping, homemaking, spinning and weaving ...) accentuate, by means of the irony, the substantial distance between Elena and the perfect and honest wife. It is clear that for the narrator Elena is not a *buena señora*, a good lady, in the sense intended by Fray Luis de León, therefore it functions again as a way to exemplify her lack of belonging to that category:

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**40** Alonso de Castillo Solórzano was a Spanish novelist and playwright, contemporary of Salas Barbadillo. In his courtesan-picaresque novel *Las harpías en Madrid* (1631), he depicts Madrid as a big sea of people (“un maremagno”), thus underlining its confusing and chaotic nature. In Alonso de Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 1631 (Madrid: Castalia, 1985), 48. Moreover, this description can be linked to the existing literary commonplace of “menosprecio de corte,” that finds its root in Antonio de Guevara’s *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea* (1539). In this dialectic relation, the court is depicted as a place of sin and perdition, whereas the village (the countryside) is portrayed as the place of virtue. It became a fertile topic for playwrights of the *comedia nueva*, such as Lope de Vega (*Fuenteovejuna* 1619), and Pedro Calderón de la Barca (*El alcalde de Zalamea* 1651), among others.

Porque, aunque no sea de todas el lino y la lana, y el huso y la tela, y el velar sobre sus criadas, y el repartirles las tareas y las raciones, pero en todas hay otras cosas que se parecen a éstas y que tienen parentesco con ellas, y en que han de velar y se han de remirar las buenas casadas con el mismo cuidado que aquí se dice. Y a todas, sin que haya en ello excepción, los está bien y los pertenece, a cada una en su manera, el no ser *perdidas* y *gastadoras*, y el ser *hacendosas* y *acrecentadoras* de sus haciendas. (52–53, emphasis is mine).

[Because, although not all women have to be good at the *linen* (sewing) and the *wool* (knitting), the *spindle* and the *loom*, and watching over their maids, and assigning them their tasks, but in all of them there are other things similar to these, that the good wives must tend to with the proper care hereby said. And all of them without exception, although in different ways, must not be *wasteful* and *lavish*, but rather *industrious* and *enhancers* of their estate.]

There is a subtle echo in Salas Barbadillo's words of Fray Luis de Leon's advice to women on how to take care of the home: the typical female trades (*labores*) such as knitting or sewing, in Elena's case are used to weave lies, not to improve the home; she does not manage her "servant" properly: La Méndez is an *alcahueta* (a go-between), an evil company and one of the main reasons honest women go astray, according to Fray Luis; being frugal and not spend too much are qualities that Elena does not possess, for we see how lavishly she, Montúfar and La Méndez live in Seville behind closed doors (144).

However, there is a paradigmatic example of a literary "good woman" who weaves: Penelope in Homer's *Odyssey*. She weaves incessantly in order to delay marrying another suitor because she still hopes that her husband, the wandering Ulysses, will return. In this case, the function of weaving serves the purpose of stretching the time for the errant husband's arrival. Penelope is a loving wife who weaves and awaits, and she does it without leaving her designated space and role, namely, the home and being a wife.

On the other hand, Elena weaves lies to deceive those men who fall in love with her. She is neither a loving wife nor does she stay in the home: she is the wanderer woman. The deception that Elena weaves takes place the night of don Sancho's wedding. Thanks to her false praises, Elena obtains information from a young servant of don Diego's uncle. Once in the uncle's house, Elena unfolds her woven cloth, and as if it were a masquerade, she reveals her false identity as a woman from León, just like don Rodrigo. Jannine Montauban has observed that Elena participates of the metaphor of the woman who, like Penelope, is a plotter (*urdidora*) and delayer, or like Scheherezade, a storyteller and delayer (*postergadora*).<sup>41</sup> However, one could argue that Elena is more akin to Celestina, another famous plotter and delayer, with whom she shares her tragic death. The celestinesque genealogy is clear: Elena's

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41 Jannine Montauban, *El ajuar de la vida picaresca* (Madrid: Visor Libros, 2003), 71–101; here 90.

mother, Zara/María, was nicknamed “Celestina” because she could repair *virgos*, thus making Elena, Celestina’s daughter.<sup>42</sup> However, I argue that there is an even more striking connection between the two: spinning and weaving. Celestina used to make and sell yarn as a cover for her many dubious activities and professions. While Penelope weaves to delay her new engagement and Scheherezade “weaves” stories to delay her death, Celestina covers her mending activities of maiden’s virginities by selling yarn, thus deceiving good and naïve women like Melibea.<sup>43</sup>

It is important to notice, though, that Elena weaves the text of her true autobiography on the road, inside the coach, which is a space that does not represent the “feminine” in the ways the home and the convent traditionally do in early modern Spain. The road, that liminal, unregulated space is where she chooses to tell her story in the first person, aligning herself with the picaresque tradition, whose function is to entertain but also to instruct:

Muchas veces, amigo el más agradable a mis ojos, y por esta razón, entre tantos elegido de mi gusto, me has mandado, y yo he deseado obedecerte, que te cuente mi nacimiento y principios, y siempre nos han salido al camino estorbos que no han dado lugar. Agora nos sobra tiempo, y el que nos corre, tan triste, que necesita mucho de que le busquemos entretenimiento; y porque el que yo te ofrezco sin duda te será muy apacible, por ver si en la mucha ociosidad desta noche puedo dar fin a lo que tantas veces empecé, prosigo (106).

[Many times, my friend, whom my eyes favor the most, and for that reason, I have chosen above many, you have asked, and I have wished to obey you, that I tell you about my birth and origins, but there have always been numerous obstacles to complete it. Now we have time to spare, and you are in dire need of entertainment; and because the one that I am offering you will be undoubtedly appeasing to you, and since the night is long and idle, I will proceed.]

In *One Thousand and One Nights* (or *The Arabian Nights*), King Shahryar is a wife-suspecting husband, resolved to marry a new virgin each day and behead her the next night so that she would have no chance to be unfaithful to him, as did his first wife. Thus, King Shahryar, forces his wives to keep him entertained to prevent them from cheating on him. Scheherezade plots a plan to delay her death until the break of dawn by telling him a long, intricate story that contains another story within it. After one thousand and one nights and stories, Scheherazade has no more stories to tell. By then, the King has fallen in love with her, pardons her life and makes her his Queen. Just as in *The Arabian Nights*, Elena’s autobiographical story has the function of entertaining Montúfar.

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<sup>42</sup> “Como el pueblo llegó a conocer sus méritos, quiso honrarla con título digno de sus hazañas, y así, la llamaron todos en voz común ‘Celestina’ segunda de este nombre” (110).

<sup>43</sup> Montauban, *El ajuar de la vida picaresca* (see note 42), 77.

Similarly, Elena plots a plan to appease her male companion, who appears to be in a melancholic state, as Montúfar is showing fear and regret rather than relief after the Toledo swindle (“en los suspiros que iba dando mostraba más arrepentimiento que satisfacción,” 106). Elena, who has been delaying the telling of her life story to Montúfar for quite some time, now fears for the success of their plan due to Montúfar’s emotional state (very much like king Shahryar and his suspicious, jealous mind). And like Scheherazade, Elena proceeds to tell him her story “agora que nos sobra tiempo” (115). Elena foresees that since the trip to Burgos is long and tedious she will have enough time to finish her account, so she carefully weaves a detailed story that appeases Montúfar’s anxieties and lulls him to sleep as if it were a quilt, putting an end to chapter three. Chapter four begins with the break of dawn and Montúfar sound asleep (“ya Montúfar dormía y el alba despertaba,” 115), in a reversal of the story of Scheherazade and Shahryar, who stay awake all night telling stories and listening. Perhaps it can be understood as a foreshadowing of the tragic ending that awaits all three characters who have listened to the life story of Celestina’s daughter.

Through her woven text, Elena reveals that she was born in Madrid, to a father from Galicia who was an alcoholic and a cuckold, and to her mother, Zara or María, who was a Morisco slave, laundress, prostitute and mender of hymens, hence the name Celestina. She also confesses that her mother had sold her three times as a virgin: the first time to a priest, the second one to a nobleman, and the third to a Genovese man, who spent all his fortune on her and her mother, and died in jail because of his debts.

I argue that it is because of her base origin, her true genealogy as well as the literary, that Elena was condemned. It was just a matter of time. The narrator creates his own text from the beginning to portray Elena as the embodiment of the immoral, loose woman, who does not belong in Toledo, city of saintly noble women, or anywhere: “El que mal vive no tiene ni casa ni ciudad permanente” (105; he who leads a bad life, has no home and no city to call his own).

Moreover, Elena is a threat to the stability of traditional marriage, since her beauty beguiles married men, such as Don Sancho, and her own marriage to Montúfar is a farce, for it is a mercantile transaction between a procurer and his prostitute, from which no offspring is begotten. Don Sancho sees Elena alone meandering the streets of Toledo on the night of his wedding, and is immediately allured and seduced by the looks of this mysterious woman. It will be pertinent to reiterate Monga’s words above mentioned about the dangers associated with the wandering woman since classical antiquity. Don Sancho meets his “Elena of Troy” on the streets and runs after her, but she disappears. The morning after his wedding he leaves the nuptial bed and his new bride, to chase after an eroticized stranger. Undoubtedly, there is an unsettling force about Elena the wanderer.

Consequently, the discourse about the loose woman and her behavior (her constant wandering, her overwhelming sexuality, and her body as an important instrument of control) are understood as a threat that can invert the order of the patriarchy. As a true picaresque protagonist in all her Protean splendor, Elena displays a state of constant movement (through her journey around the Iberian Peninsula), always slipping out of the grasp of men like Don Sancho, as well as her continuous transformations (dress, masks, disguise, false impersonations and identities) creating confusion, chaos and disorder around her. Both author and men try to hold stiffly on to her but she changes her appearance constantly. It is only through death and by means of the *encubamiento* that she can be confined and restrained. Ironically, her final voyage is the return to her birthplace: the river Manzanares. As a *pícaro morisca*, thief, prostitute, and spouse killer, Elena's sentence to death by *garrote* and *encubamiento* symbolizes the exclusion of this long line of loose women who are condemned because of their lineage.

In conclusion, in the same way that *encubamiento* as *vindicta pública*, a public punishment, is an affirmation of the power and superiority of the monarchy and a way to inflict fear in the people, the picaresque novel authored by men, pursues to entertain and moralize by means of inscribing that punishment on the *pícaro's* body for her transgressions. The strangulation and placement of Elena's body inside a sack (or barrel), followed by tossing it into the river Manzanares, make possible the desire of the male author and the patriarchal system to exemplify and moralize by punishing gender and genre, that is the *female* picaresque, as well as their bodies (the book and the female body), by expelling them from the literary community and the community of the living.

Warren Tormey

# The Journey within the Journey: *Catabasis* and Travel Narrative in Late Medieval and Early Modern Epic

## Defining *Catabasis*

Finding its pre-literate roots in the ritualistic traditions of ancient religions,<sup>1</sup> *catabasis* (or *katabasis*) is the term given to the conventional underworld journey within the narrative structure of epic. Described as a “complex, protean motif,”<sup>2</sup> the term derives from the Greek term *κατάβασις* (“going down, descent,” originating in *καταβαίνειν*, “to go down”).<sup>3</sup> Based in the concept of a military retreat, the term is juxtaposed with *anabasis*, another term with martial associations, derived from the Greek *ἀνάβασις* (“ascent, going up,” from *ἀναβαίνειν*, “to go or walk up”),<sup>4</sup> or advance, implying a “rapacious ascent from a lower world and return there with the spoils of the upper regions.”<sup>5</sup> Rooted in martial senses,

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1 See Lee Foust, “Dante’s *Commedia* and the Poetics Christian *Catabasis*,” Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2008 (last accessed through World Cat via ProQuest [<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/docview/304526497>] on April 4, 2017): here 6 and 8. Further down, Foust offers the crucial observation that “the land of the dead presented in catabatic texts is usually both a realistic reflection and, at the same time, a radical re-arrangement of the world as it is seen by the text’s author – usually through the prism of the author’s religion, his or her moral concepts, or spiritual beliefs.” Within these spiritualized origins, the motif is defined further according to a pair of distinct traditions. These are identified by Raymond J. Clark, *Catabasis: Vergil and the Wisdom-Tradition* (Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner, 1979): 15–36, here 21 and 32, as the fertility-tradition and the wisdom-tradition. The former tradition is identified with the episodic Sumerian and Akkadian traditions dating to the Second Millennium B.C.E., as “a place of retreat or home of hostile forces which the deity for some reason withdraws or is allured or is sent in punishment or exile or disappears in an act of aggrandizement.” The latter, more directly aligned with the traditions of Homer and Virgil, has its roots more directly in the unified traditions of Gilgamesh and is understood as “a Journey of the Dead made by a living person in the flesh who returns to our world to tell the tale.”

2 See Willard McCarty, “The Catabatic Structure of Satan’s Quest,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 56.2 (1986/87): 283–307; here 283.

3 See “*katabasis*,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, (last accessed through OED [<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/Entry/102618?redirectedFrom=Katabasis#eid>] on February 22, 2018)

4 See “*anabasis*,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, (last accessed through OED [<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/view/Entry/6874?redirectedFrom=anabasis#eid>] on February 22, 2018).

5 McCarty, “The Catabatic Structure of Satan’s Quest” (see note 2), 283.

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both terms imply a journey across spatial distances and worldly boundaries, and so figure within the larger, traditionally epic narrative structures of travel and warfare. In its most traditional sense, then, *catabasis* depicts a detour leading to a purposeful encounter between the hero and a spirit-prophet figure, enabling an exchange which prompts the hero's psychological transformation within that mythic, underworld terrain. This encounter figures centrally within a narrative that culminates in the fulfillment of a grand prophetic vision toward which all narrative elements are then directed, one realized as a later consequence, singularly or in combination, of an all-revealing journey, a return to native spaces or realization of new homelands, or an apocalyptic battle that confirms the protagonist's heroic destiny.<sup>6</sup>

Within the Homeric tradition, *catabasis* is depicted as Thetis travels to the underworld smithy of Haphaestios in the *Iliad*. Once there, she persuades him to fabricate the Shield of Achilles, which then becomes both a decisive factor in the outcome of the Siege of Troy and a timely expression of the connections between agriculture, warfare, politics, and empire within that world – and therefore a message about the larger significance of that siege and the importance of Achilles's triumph over Hector. The *Odyssey* likewise depicts an underworld detour in Odysseus's homeward journey, where he gains wise council from Tiresias during his visit to the realms of the dead,<sup>7</sup> thus preparing himself for later challenges in

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6 McCarty, "The Catabatic Structure of Satan's Quest" (see note 2), 289, explores the problematic nature of the effort to define *catabasis* in terms of a form of "initiation." I feel that more qualifications would offer welcome support to his conclusion that, beyond its basic status as a "motif or thematic element," *catabasis* "is more generally a literary structure of descent and return" (291). Even so, his argument (see 289–91) offers useful contexts for understanding the thematic dimensions and transitional characteristics ascribed to the hero's underworld journey within the larger narrative structures of mythic and epic literature.

7 This scene is also described as an expression of the motif of *nekyia* (ἡ νέκυια), or an informational encounter with a recently deceased spirit. A defining moment in the narrative of Odysseus' homeward journey, *nekyia* is discussed in detail by Clark, *Catabasis* (see note 1), 37–78; here 77 and 78. Establishing the "catabatic significance of Odysseus' journey described in the *Nekyia*," Clark likewise distinguishes these two motifs by defining the differences in terms of spatial displacement and movement across worldly into otherworldly boundaries, arguing that "[t]here is no reason to suppose that Odysseus is below the earth until after his meeting with Achilles, when he seems, if not to be below ground already, at least to be peering through the front door into the interior of the Underworld," thus contrasting "the catabatic journey" undertaken by Odysseus as a distinguishing, once-in-a-lifetime event as opposed to a less transformational "necromantic association." In distinguishing between *catabasis* and the related concept of *nekyia*, Foust, "Dante's *Commedia* and the Poetics Christian *Catabasis*" (see note 1), 11–12, reaches a different conclusion, explaining that "Odysseus' parley with Tiresias in *Odyssey* XI, although often called a *catabasis* rather appears to fall more correctly into this category as there is no actual descent on Odysseus' part. (Hence the appellation *nekyia* also often given the scene.)"



his eventual return home. Conjoining the Homeric themes of journey and battle, Virgil portrays Aeneas's *catabasis* centrally in Book VI of the *Aeneid*. Leading his band of Trojan refugees away from the now-sacked Troy, Aeneas passes through the realms of Tartarus and Elysium. Here, he catches a glimpse of the future Roman Empire, an imperial vision that his deceased father Anchises must translate for him (VI. 756–886). This underworld descent, positioned at the middle of Virgil's epic, divides the two Homeric epic motifs – journey and warfare – which shape the work's narrative structure, and also serve an essential purpose as Aeneas gains a clearer articulation of Rome's imperial destiny. Likewise, his underworld sojourn also serves an implied allegorical purpose as a clarifying rite of passage, marking the end of the journeying of the Trojan refugees and the beginning of their preparations for the warfare that ultimately result in Rome's founding. In Book VIII, as the Trojans' culminating battle with the assembled armies on Latium approaches, Virgil recaptures Homeric themes when depicting Vulcan's fashioning of the Shield of Aeneas. Within these classical narratives from antiquity, *catabasis* serves multiple purposes within the epic convention: to reinforce the moral imperatives of the heroic quest, to legitimize a cultural past through a prophetic vision of future events, to define the behaviors that it judges as transgressive, and to articulate a sense of the culture's view of the afterlife.

Beyond the influences of the classical tradition, early Christian writers also likely had scriptural motifs to draw upon in developing their version of *catabasis*, one that served largely allegorical purposes.<sup>8</sup> The descent to the underworld served well within the structures of various Christian journeys, especially the *visio*, or the otherworld vision, and later, the various forms of salvation narrative. Patterned after the journeys of the classical hero, these underworld motifs served the Christian pilgrim following the savior's example, walking in his metaphorical footsteps, and witnessing the teeth-gnashing misery of condemned sinners. Biblical precedent for the underworld journey is evident in the apocalyptic scenes in the Books of Daniel and Jonah of the Old Testament, and in the many Harrowing of Hell episodes in the New Testament's Books of Matthew, Luke, Acts, and Revelation, and is clearly discernible in the apocalyptic visions of St. Paul as described in II Corinthians: 31–44.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Foust, "Dante's *Commedia* and the Poetics Christian *Catabasis*" (see note 1), 97–98.

<sup>9</sup> In the Old Testament, the Gehenna district outside of Jerusalem, a disreputable area serving as a sort of garbage dump, provided writers an early vision of the underworld. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 2., ed. James Orr (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915): here 1183, explains that "[i]n the New Testament (King James Version margin) Gehenna occurs in Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; Matthew 10:28; Matthew 18:9; Matthew 23:15, 33 Mark 9:43, 45,

This tradition of the underworld journey is carried forward in the various versions of medieval *catabasis* evident in specific episodes in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*; in the *Visios* of Tundale the Knight and The Monk of Eynsham; in the *Lives* of Guthlac, Cuthbert, and other medieval saints; in the various medieval versions of the Orphic Tale; and in the elaborate visionary detail depicted by the *Pearl* poet. Exploring a related theme, the *Beowulf* poet also follows the pattern established by Virgil, employing the motif of the purposeful underworld sojourn within a narrative directed toward a comparable concern: that of achieving a "fit" kingship for a struggling empire beset by otherworldly threats. The motif also resonates in the chivalric grandeurs of the *Song of Roland* (ca. 1100), and defines the narrative of allegorical journeying within the commercially-infused travel narratives of Dante's *Inferno* (ca. 1320) and, as been suggested by others, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1390).<sup>10</sup>

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47, Luke 12:5, and James 3:6. In all of these it designates the place of eternal punishment of the wicked, generally in connection with the final judgment. It is associated with fire as the source of torment" (definition also accessible via <http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/G/gehenna.html>; last accessed 22 Dec. 2017). N. Wyatt, "The Concept and Purpose of Hell: Its Nature and Development in West Semitic Thought," (*Numen* 56 [2009]: 161–84): here 180, defines Gehenna as "a term which has become a name for hell. Both Old and New Testaments use other terminology, such as Hades, Sheol, the Pit, the Grave, and so on. By the time of early Christianity they seem to have more or less coalesced in meaning, though they will have had slightly different shades of meaning. While Gehenna occurs 10 times in the gospels ..., Hades occurs 11 times (Matthew 11:23, 16:18; Luke 10:15, 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; 1 Corinthians 15:55; Revelation 1:18, 6:8, 20:13, 14). This suggests a conception, probably still fairly fluid, which shares elements of contemporary Greek and Roman cosmology, themselves heirs to the Mediterranean *koine*, together with Jewish elements, which themselves seem to have absorbed earlier Egyptian or even Zoroastrian ideas (such as the Lake of Fire)." The Old Testament parable of Jonah and the Whale (Jonah 1:17–2:10) has also been characterized as an example of *catabasis*.

**10** This recognition of the narrative purposes of *catabasis* within the larger structures of classical and early Christian epic narratives foregrounds my effort to explore the nature of the underworld journey within late Medieval and Early Modern epic. In a series of late medieval and early modern epics we see *catabasis* featured in varied terms, offering tangible geographical features, in motifs approaching travel literature as the epic form adapts to increasingly sophisticated political conditions and economic relationships. The Florentine pilgrim Dante's underworld sojourn prepares him for the greater revelations that follow, providing context for his banishment from that politically contentious but fiscally thriving metropolis. In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, attention to the placement and order of both the individual tales and the larger tale fragments has been discussed by a series of scholars attempting to find an overarching narrative coherence. Within this debate, the significance of "Canon's Yeoman's Tale" placement has been examined. Charles Muscatine, "The Canon's Yeoman's Tale," *Chaucer and the French Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957): 214–21; rpt. *Chaucer Criticism: The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Richard J. Schoek and Jerome Taylor (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 1960, 1965): 259–67; here 259 and 267, remarks on "[t]he abruptness of the Canon's arrival among the pilgrims, his equally abrupt flight, and the breathless, vehement urgency of his Yeoman's discourse,"

In depicting heroic travels through their respective underworld landscapes, therefore, epic poets employ a full field of motifs, all with economic and political overtones, to establish the moral imperatives of their works. A central premise for this essay is that within the larger narrative structure of epic, the underworld journey – as traditionally portrayed – features representational images that give voice to the economic and social systems which shape them. Patterns of economic exchange and social relationships, aspects of landscape and topographical detail, and articulations of a spatial and moral geography are evident within the imagery

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explaining that the tale critiques “that complacent faith in science that despises God” (259). Suggesting that “[n]o tale could be moved to another fragment without compromising and destroying the structural integrity of that fragment,” Jerome Mandel, *Geoffrey Chaucer: Building the Fragments of the Canterbury Tales* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992), 185 and 187, argues for a “pattern of parallel events that establishes the structural integrity of each fragment.” In this light, the noxious and disquieting moral character of “The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale” is significant, as “in the Second Nun’s Tale and the Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale Chaucer treats smell in contrastive ways,” and while the “Second Nun reveals secrets, the Canon’s Yeoman professes to keep them hidden (and ironically reveals them).” Despite this critical attention, the matter of Chaucer’s motivation for including this pair of new arrivals to the pilgrimage at this unlikely late juncture remains an ongoing matter of scholarly interest. For an excellent overview of the debate see Mark J. Bruhn, “Art, Anxiety, and Alchemy in the ‘Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale,’” *Chaucer Review* 33.3 (1999): 288–315. Finally, with “The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale’s” penultimate position in the narrative’s sequence, Chaucer allows his readers to see the volatile and easily exploited nature of alchemy as an arcane and learned scientific tradition. In hearing the Yeoman describe his account (of his own experience?) of alchemical charlatanry, the pilgrims are exposed to a sort of symbolic underworld in an imaginative encounter which prepares them for their ultimate salvation. His alchemically-themed tale employs a motif in which arcane scientific pursuits intersect with crass profiteering impulses, one enabling the pilgrims to experience, on the brink of their arrival at Canterbury, a *catabatic* excursion through toxic alchemical dens. In exploring the thematic linkages between “magic and science” of *The Franklin’s Tale* and *The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale*, such that “their presentation is very much locked in the secrecy that each domain of knowledge would seek to offer” (509); Daniel Pigg, “Representing Magic and Science in *The Franklin’s Tale* and *The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale*: Chaucer’s Exploration of Connected Topics,” *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time: The Occult in Pre-Modern Sciences, Medicine, Literature, Religion and Astronomy*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 20 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 507–22; here 511–12 and 521, implies the feasibility of reading a catabatic purpose into the significance of the tale’s placement. His essay considers the significance of this connection in light of The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale’s role within Chaucer’s larger narrative design “to create a harmony by separating the false from the true, now that the pilgrims are only roughly five miles from Canterbury when the Yeoman and the Canon join the pilgrimage.” At a moment where an impulse to “(distinguish) the false from the true, the base metal from gold and silver, magic from science, and magic natural from darker aspects that encircle the traditions,” Pigg establishes that the “unmasking” of the Canon as a “false alchemist” serves an important revelatory purpose at this key narrative juncture.

of *catabasis*, serving within the larger purposes of the epic genre to address these culturally significant concerns.<sup>11</sup> This varied field of motifs finds expression in the colonial subtext of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, where the heroic journey to the underworld is displaced into a beguiling otherworld; and in the mercantile and proto-industrial images depicted in the hellish underworld landscapes of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where the character of the heroic quest and the nature of transgression are reinvented, recast from a heroic journey downward into an anti-heroic journey upward.

The focus of this essay is on the particular aspects that *catabasis* takes within these two latter works, both emerging from early modern England, and separated by a period of about 75 years. Their authors, equally mindful of the traditions and motifs they inherited, consciously patterned their poetic careers according to the *rota virgiliana* – honing their emerging skills in the Bucolic mode of the pastoral eclogue before engaging as mature poets with the Georgic tradition. Only as fully mature poets are they equipped to turn their attentions toward the lofty concerns of epic poetry. More innovators than inheritors of poetic tradition, however, Spenser and Milton each remade epic motifs in significant ways, both showing a common habit of depicting the otherworld journey according to specific political, economic and cultural realities which shaped each poet's age.

In this way, the epics of Spenser and Milton feature forms of *catabasis* which both acknowledge the traditions of epic while also transforming them in response to evolving political and economic conditions within quest and travel narratives infused with commercial dimensions. For example, Spenser's Faeryland is shown to be a place to forge an imperial vision for the English nation – and therefore boasts a vision of state heroism represented in exaggerated chivalric motifs (weapons, armor) which come to represent the symbols of English Imperial authority which justify its colonizing practices. This message is powerfully inscribed in

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<sup>11</sup> The surface-level concerns of epic are directed on the surface toward matters of heroism, duty, warfare, and challenges to fate and/or the favor of the gods. In portraying these themes, writers and composers of epic also negotiate between the economic realities and social practices of their worlds, the traditions and conventions of the genre that they inherited and adapted, and the influence of other narrative, imagistic, and thematic superstructures and motifs which likewise shaped the epic form. Within the narrative dimensions of epic, the imperatives of warfare must be enhanced by describing the implements of battle in detail and by portraying them with a mythic stature that connects the hero's actions to the heroics of past warriors and battles. The preoccupation of this epic with warfare and battle is oriented also to its subsurface concerns of communal well-being. Therefore, within the parameters of the epic form one can therefore note its secondary, but no less notable, focus on proto-state politics, economic practices, and visions of fit leadership. In this way, epic literature documents the economic and social lives of a developing tribal culture as much as it does the chivalric ethos, proto-mercantile dimensions, colonial ambitions, or early industrial efforts of a more developed cultural and political entity.

Book I Canto X, shown in the process of Redcrosse's penitence. Here his lineage is presented in proper Virgilian detail as Spenser seeks to legitimize England's early colonial imperatives within a brooding landscape populated by a beguiling and illusory native other.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, writing in the wake of the English Revolution, Milton portrays the underworld experiences of Satan's minions as replications of Parliamentary councils engaging in activities that inform his travels according to the mercantile character of the seventeenth-century statehood: profiteering nautical journeys, navigational exploration, colonizing ventures, and resource exploitation. Modifying the conventions of the underworld descent and return to inject distinct aspects of the early modern age – primarily colonialism and commerce, but also politics and geography – these two epics reflect an evolving motif of *catabasis* that conveys more deliberate topographical detail; depicts a distinctive moral geography; responds to volatile and violent political conditions; portrays more nuanced psychological dimensions; and reflects increasingly sophisticated economic relationships, ventures, and transformations.

Spenser modifies the traditional conventions of the catabatic journey downward by displacing it outward, portraying his heroic characters as eternally meandering through, and occasionally entangled within, a forbidding, topographically detailed Faeryland otherworld. Their heroic ambitions are recurrently undermined in light of the eternally illusory world they confront

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12 Catherine Bates, "The Faerie Queene: England's National Monument," *The Cambridge Companion to the Epic*, ed. Catherine Bates (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 133–45; here 133, establishes that Spenser's work, England's "first national epic," was composed according to Virgilian conceits, seeking to "(situate) the Elizabethan present at the near end of a foundational history that stretches back into the distant past, as far back, indeed, as Troy." This historical emphasis accounts for the author's obsession with origins and lineage, as shown in his poem's vigorous use of classical motifs and allusions and etymological origins which in turn create the poem's "bookish" character and serve both to align Spenser's work with Virgil's imperialist visions, and therefore, to authenticate Elizabeth's colonialist ambitions within his epic project. Sythrie Pugh, "Reinventing the Wheel: Spenser's 'Virgilian Career,'" *Spenser in the Moment*, ed. Paul J. Hecht and J. B. Lethbridge (Madison, NJ, and Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015): 3–34; here 3 and 4–5, offers a more critical assessment of Spenser's "Virgilian" identification, arguing first that "to say that Spenser imitated Virgil, or even strove to be a new Virgil for England, is almost to utter a cliché." Instead, in tracing the process by which Spenser patterned his career after the Roman poet and found thematic points of linkage across multiple genres, Pugh establishes that "Virgil is so important an intertext that we cannot fully understand Spenser's poetry without first understanding the nature of his engagement with this Roman predecessor," and so she offers a "mode of reading Spenser which pays attention to the ways in which he responds to the more skeptical and critical aspects of Virgil's poems," thus establishing the "sense of Spenser's engagement with his model as much more sophisticated and self-aware than has usually been perceived" and showing his "remold(ing) [of] the career pattern mapped out by Virgil."

on journeys where motifs of descent and return are embedded within larger quest narratives. In this light, the various antagonists within that landscape collectively represent the ongoing native resistance to English colonial enterprise. Meanwhile, Milton inverts and expands those conventions, depicting not a heroic descent through chaotic realms to achieve moral clarity about some higher purpose, but rather an anti-heroic ascent through chaotic realms toward an earthly Paradise, a travel and return narrative fueled by “Pride and Worse Ambition” (4. 40) across the middle six books of his epic, one conceived in and validated by stately councils, undertaken to create moral confusion, and resulting in Satan’s triumphant return to celebrate the corrosive discord he has wrought: a goal that brings about not the realization of empire, but the spiritual retreat of humankind as realized in a postlapsarian world defined by warfare, colonizing, and political strategizing.

## Colonial *Catabasis*: Penetrating and Transforming the Native Other’s Landscape and Culture in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*

The landscape of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* features vaguely determined underworld pitfalls throughout, including the House of Pride, the Bowre of Blis, the Den of Errors, the Slough of Despond, and the House of Mammon. Throughout the work’s seven book structure, these sites and others represent the many minefields through which individual heroes must negotiate in various catabatic episodes while maintaining their resolve in the face of temptations and diversions. Even as Spenser himself envisioned his finished epic in Virgilian terms, describing it in his “Letter to Raleigh” as a complete twelve-book structure, the ostentatiously knightly heroes of Spenser’s Faeryland, rather than embarking upon a clearly defined otherworld journey around which the narrative is organized, instead navigate through an indeterminate otherworld, a space where they must perpetually resist the appeals and entrapments offered by the native other. Thus, Spenser’s various heroes – Artegall, Guyon, Arthur, and Calidore most prominent among them – navigate a landscape of enduring *catabasis*, one defined less by its spatial geography and more by its sense of dislocation and unsettled opacity.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Wayne Erickson, *Mapping the Faerie Queene: Quest Structures and the World of the Poem* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), here 3, describes the key dimensions of Spenser’s Faeryland topography as a “multiform fictional universe” that includes a “syncretic epic cosmos

Even within this unfinished narrative structure, these Spenserian heroes are defined most fully according to the virtues they cultivate as travelers navigating this disorienting space and the ethical authority they earn in these quest journeys, resisting external diversions and overcoming internal doubts while steadfastly adhering to their ultimate purpose: to embody a rigid civilizing presence represented by an aggressively chivalric ethos.

Observant of Virgilian traditions and dutifully mindful of the Roman poet's influence, Spenser thus demonstrates a pronounced habit of "Virgilian self-identification"<sup>14</sup> where, in advancing his own career, the poet validated Elizabeth's imperialist agenda by articulating both the moral imperatives and the social and economic dimensions of colonial settlement. Later, with his own colonizing experiences transforming, Spenser finds space in the *Faerie Queene's* later books to reconcile his own nagging disquiet about these same imperatives. When compared with Books I–III of *Faerie Queen*, recent critics claim that Books IV–VI of *The Faerie Queene* express Spenser's growing uncertainty about the feasibility of the Munster Plantation scheme and his role in it; at the very least, they reveal his changing attitudes toward the environs and people in the vicinity of his Kilcolman estates, those landscapes that served to signify his social ascendancy.<sup>15</sup>

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stretching from heaven and the abode of the classical deities to demonic underground realms and a complex terrestrial setting comprising a generalized fallen earth and a specific spatial and temporal political geography," emphasizing the latter as a "multivalent representation of religious history, myth, and legend" of Spenser's England.

**14** See Richard Rambuss, *Spenser's Secret Career* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 27, 46, 65; see also "Spenser's Life and Career," *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser*, ed. Andrew Hadfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13–36; here 29, where Rambuss highlights the "open secret of Spenser's careerism," which shaped the poet's role as an enforcer of brutal English colonial policies during the Irish pacification campaigns of the late 1570's and 1580's.

**15** Spenser's reputation has increasingly become aligned with the most disastrous of Elizabeth's military campaigns. Within the larger Elizabethan hegemonic structure, the poet located his own channels for social advancement in her colonizing project in Ireland, finding it initially profitable to conflate his poetic and social ambitions, and configuring his colonial ideology as a sort of secular crusading; yet over the course of his experience in Ireland, a subtle but discernible shift is evident in Spenser's own attitude toward this Elizabethan enterprise, as reflected in his differing treatment of chivalric images. Biographer Gary Waller, *Edmund Spenser: A Literary Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 20–22, argues that Spenser wrote within a milieu that advanced the "ideological resonances" of the English colonialist ethos, fashioning an identity that highlighted the poet's Englishness and therefore speaking to the problematic nature of English national identity itself within Ireland. *The Faerie Queene*, therefore, glorifies what prominent Spenser apologist C. S. Lewis called a "detestable policy" (Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* [1936; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979], 349, quoted in Waller 19) of suppression within the Irish "colony."

I have argued elsewhere that Spenser's epic treatise aligns structurally, imagistically, and thematically with his well-known political views on the Irish situation as expressed in the *View of the Present State of Ireland*.<sup>16</sup> There I sought to establish that *The Faerie Queene's* two part narrative structure is distinguished by a six-year gap between the 1590 and the 1596 publications. Books I–III, published in the first, are thus distinguished from Books IV–VII, which were added to the latter. The narrative structure of the epic as a whole, therefore, aligns with what is essentially a two-part structure to the arguments of the *View*.<sup>17</sup> My focus

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In their historicist readings of Spenser's epic, Willy Maley, *Salvaging Spenser: Colonialism, Culture, and Identity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), here 34, and Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), consider the idiom of "Spenser's Irish English, or Hiberno-English," which "was most certainly inspired by Chaucer, but it was also inspired by the survival of an ancient dialect of English in Elizabethan Ireland," which presented the poet with "the well of English undefyled" (*Faerie Queene*, IV.ii.32.8). Moreover, these efforts to pattern his life and work after models supplied by these most prominent English and Roman precursors were shaped by a conscious effort on the poet's behalf to elide his political service with the poetic mantle he claimed (Rambuss, *Spenser's Secret Career* [see note 14], here 56). These facts are proclaimed rather elliptically in the mysterious glosses to Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, his "poetic debut" which reached print the year before the poet began the period of service in Ireland that was to inspire his epic, and that was itself dictated by this pattern of "Virgilian self-identification" that both shaped the poet's reception of the motif of *catabasis* and prompted his radical reinvention of it.

**16** See Warren Tormey, "On the Edges of Settlement: Propagandizing Colonial Hegemony and Realizing Social Mobility in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," *Medieval Perspectives* 30 (2015): 127–48.

**17** Presented as a dialogue, the *View* outlines the duties of the English colonizers who are tasked with "civilizing" the Native Irish and Old English communities beyond the Dublin Pale, ultimately locating the solution within a process first of military occupation and later of gradual settlement. Although an oversimplification to divide the *View* into these two basic sections, it is accurate to note that the first half's emphasis on criticizing the customs of the Irish and Old English is distinguished from the discussion of larger colonial imperatives of the later part. Essentially, the tenor of the first half is that the Irish are not what they seem and their very lives are governed by a sort of innate secrecy which outsiders are unable to fathom, sentiments that by 1596 had already been captured in Books I–III of Spenser's epic. The argument of the second half seeks to establish how the influences of English civility will eliminate this maddening characteristic of the Irish, and the thematic dimensions of Books IV–VII are more in accord with this vision.

The dominant thematic motifs of Books I–III and Books IV–VII therefore follow the respective argumentative and thematic patterns established in both parts of the *View*: Books I–III depict the Irish people and customs according to the idea that they resist signification and remain perpetually inscrutable to the colonizing English sensibilities. Books IV–VII, in contrast, follow the pattern of the later section of the *View*, in which the imaginative results of Spenser's surveyorship are applied more directly to his epic project. His characters negotiate here a landscape that has been "mapped" according to the terms described by Erickson, *Mapping the Faerie Queene* (see note 13), here 3 and 5: it is more familiar, its features have been named, it is more fully situated



here is confined to these books discussing the concept of *catabasis* as expressed within Books I–III, where the exaggerated chivalric imagery represents both as a statement of masculine power and a statement of resistance to a native, often feminized other. In the sword and the shield, one sees both the means to strike out at that other, as well as the restriction of the self in contact with it. The motif of armor likewise serves as a sort of “exoskeleton” which protects the chivalric, colonizing heroes from the amorphous, shape-shifting (and in one notable case, mantle-covered), native characters they face who dwell ominously in the Faeryland landscape. As Spenser’s prefatory “Letter to Raleigh” indicates, the epic’s purpose serves the effort “to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline.”<sup>18</sup> The various and episodic quest narratives embarked upon by the principal heroic figures in Books I–III – Redcrosse, Arthur, Guyon, and Britomart – demand that “gentle discipline” in the face of eternal distraction and temptation within this native otherworld, and so capture this process of fashioning.<sup>19</sup>

A reading of Books I–III highlights the connections between the hero’s rigid cultivation of the virtues allegorized in each Book’s central character, and their armor, which symbolizes this steadfast purpose in the face of an evanescent, shape-shifting landscape populated by peoples appearing first appealing and then threatening. Collectively, the books embody the historic and mythic grandeur

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“within (a) larger spatial, temporal, and ontological setting,” and so “includes a horizontal dimension of spatial and temporal geography and a vertical dimension of topographical and cosmographical geography.” Therefore, it is ultimately more “civilized,” even as long-standing threats to this new civility openly persist. Upon such ideas is his epic project in Books I–III redirected to the revised one in Books IV–VII, which show an authorial viewpoint that is more reflective, more personalized, and resonant with the propagandistic impulses of colonizing rhetoric.

**18** All textual quotations from *Spenser: The Complete Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (1912; Oxford: University Press, 1970; paperback ed.: 1975, 1979, 1983, 1985, 1987). Letter to Raleigh accessible online via: <http://spenserians.cath.vt.edu/TextRecord.php?textsid=102> (last accessed November 27, 2017). *Faerie Queene* full text accessible online via: <http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/fqintro.html> (last accessed on Nov. 27, 2017).

**19** Through the course of the books’ intertwined narratives, each figure undergoes requisite trials and realizes a greater, more complete version of the self; and this more developed version of the heroic self represents a fulfillment of the English colonial vision. *The Faerie Queene*’s moral imperatives, as indicated in Spenser’s prefatory “Letter to Raleigh,” addresses those segments of Elizabethan society entrusted with the difficult colonizing work of spreading English hegemony across distant worlds that are simultaneously threatening, alien, and alluring. The most essential mandate of Spenser’s poem is to educate this English “self,” or national character, in ways that enable it to withstand the threats and temptations posed by the native “other.” The native Irish, along with those assimilated English overlords from the Anglo-Norman period, their innate Englishness compromised, thus represented in Spenser’s estimation the greatest threats to Elizabeth’s colonial imperatives.

of England, and the prophetic vision at the end of Book III establishes the colonial imperatives of each character's sojourn through the perpetual *catabasis* of that Faeryland otherworld. As allegorical representations, the threats faced by the heroes of the 1590 *Faerie Queene*, especially Redcrosse but also Guyon and Britomart, are tangible and life-threatening not only to the hero but also to the larger health of the nation.

Those threats are particularly mettlesome in the exercise of colonizing and nation-building; in this way also Books I–III differ from IV–VIII, where the conflict is more wanton and arbitrary, and the chivalric imagery less purposeful. Additionally, the secretive characteristics of the Irish are applied immediately in the first Canto with the introduction of the figure of Archimago (I.I.29), who soon exerts his divisive forces over Redcrosse and Una. Appearing as a kindly, scripture-reading hermit who offers the pair a night's respite, Archimago – whose name translates roughly into “the first image” – then sows the seeds of discord in Redcrosse's mind. The knight sees his betrothed acting unfaithful in a “false dream” (1.1.43) contrived by Archimago and worked by his agent Morpheus. In his very name, Archimago, he embodies the sort of false perception which defines Spenserian *catabasis* and serves to lead the unwary hero astray. With his nocturnal machinations, both Una and Redcrosse see false visions of the other (I.II, 5, I.II, 11), and their subsequent disunion sets into motion the central imperative of this allegorical narrative. With their reunion eleven books later, the symbolic justification of British colonial enterprise is established.

However, the embodiment of duplicity in Books I–III is revealed later in Book I, and is, not coincidentally, cloaked in a mantle. The figure of Duessa, who appears first as Fidessa, and whose embodiment of faith will be shown graphically to be false, is introduced in Canto II, remains a pervasive presence throughout the rest of Book I. In loose conjunction with the three knights, the Sarazin brothers Sansfoy, Sansloy, and Sansjoy (“without faith,” “without loyalty,” and “without happiness”), Duessa seeks to disrupt Redcrosse's effort to reunite with Una and to forestall a realized Faeryland under the dominion of Glorianna (Elizabeth). Both Redcrosse and Una come into contact with the Sarazin brothers; Redcrosse slays Sansfoy and takes up with Fidessa, who, when her mantle is removed, will be memorably exposed as Duessa (I.II.15–19). Likewise, her betrothed angrily departed after his false nocturnal vision of her faithlessness, Una takes up with Archimago, who, true to form, has disguised himself as Redcrosse. Upon seeing Redcrosse /Archimago and wishing to avenge his brother's death, Sansloy attacks the false Redcrosse, slays him, and takes Una as his prize. While Redcrosse and Fidessa journey to the House of Pride, Una herself is condemned to resist Sansloy's advances until rescued by the Satyrs early in Canto VI. Both Redcrosse's trip to the House of Pride and Una's Rescue are problematic

ventures which show the Spenserian expression of *catabasis*, where heroic characters, confronting duplicitous realities behind a character or icon's seemingly benign visage, develop the requisite virtues to continue their quests.

The House of Pride is, of course, one of the most memorable icons in the epic, and critics have much to say about both the house's shaky foundations and the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins, a view that Redcrosse is treated to just before his battle with Sansjoy, who, yet again, seeks to avenge Redcrosse for the death of his brother. Engaging the "sacred lawes of armes" to maintain his honor and acknowledge the occasion's importance, Redcrosse acquiesces and holds his own despite an intense battle. Meanwhile, as he stays as Fidessa's hesitant guest, she plots to detain him further, and visits Night, her mother, in a vivid underworld journey (31ff.). Returning from the underworld with her plan intact, she discovers that the wary Redcrosse has left the House of Pride under the cloak of Darkness, where he realizes that his separation from Una was contrived by false images.

Meanwhile, as Canto VI begins, Una holds a lustful Sansloy at bay until rescued by a group of Satyrs. This group of wild, natural, primitive peoples are of uncertain status, but prove to be benign if mildly threatening rescuers for Una. Initially "troublesome but benign,"<sup>20</sup> they are later shown to be lustful and impulsive, embodying "a dominance of the dictates of the body over those of the rational head."<sup>21</sup> Within the scope of Spenser's allegory, the Satyrs are seen as Native Irish, untouched by society and most at home in their native element. They are of loose morals and are prone to excessive celebration, but their best virtues are embodied in the figure of Satyrane (20), a child of a human mother and a Satyr father and a well-known figure throughout Faeryland as a tamer of animals and as one at home in the natural world. He "forms a link between the virtues and vices of nature and nurture, being represented as 'a wild man in the woods.'"<sup>22</sup> Finding Una at the center of the Satyrs' ongoing diurnal celebrations (28–29), he "rescues" her, and informs her of what he believes to be Redcrosse's "death" (really, the death of Archimago at the hands of Sansloy). Later, the pair finds this same false representative of Una's beloved, and Satyrane slays him. At this time, the escaped Redcrosse has encountered the giant Orgoglio, whose destructiveness is compared with the effects of cannon fire (I.VII.13). The overmatched knight is easily defeated and banished to Orgoglio's dungeon, where, by the machinations of his loyal servant dwarf, he is able to convey the news that he is still alive. The dwarf tells Una of Redcrosse's misfortune, and the timely appearance of Arthur

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<sup>20</sup> Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience* (see note 15), 136.

<sup>21</sup> Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience* (see note 15), 136.

<sup>22</sup> Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience* (see note 15), 137.

(I.VII. 29) promises his eventual rescue. Significantly, in the account of Arthur's arrival, the narrator devotes great detail to describing his armor, made by Merlin and well-suited to his mythic stature (I.VII.29–36). Derived, according to Paul Alpers, from the images of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Arthur's shield serves as a self-justifying lens by which "all that was not such, as seemed in sight / Before that shield did fade, and suddeine fall" (I.VII.35).<sup>23</sup>

As Canto VIII begins, Arthur and Una are headed toward Orgoglio's castle, and are soon to rescue Una's betrothed. Defined by their protective regard for her virginal purity, both Arthur and Redcrosse are central to Spenser's notion of English civility: the former assumes a mythic dimension, while the latter offers a more historical and mythical effect within Spenser's allegory. As such, they serve key symbolic roles in the pro-colonialist rhetoric of Book I. Una unites Arthur and Redcrosse at the intersection of mythic and historic pasts. In the episode, historical England is thereby "rescued" by its mythic past (Canto VII). In his prefatory

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**23** In other words, it serves as the perfect chivalric foil for the amorphous and shifting enemies that lurk in this Faeryland otherworld. Alpers writes, "[i]t is not so easy as one might think to attach a precise significance to Arthur's shield, but 'illuminating grace' is surely close to what Spenser has in mind" (see Paul Alpers, *The Poetry of the Faerie Queene* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967], here 170). Likewise, serving as a most noble embodiment of English virtue and a vivid embodiment of its glorious mythic past, Arthur soon convinces the distraught Una that Redcrosse's rescue is both possible and necessary. He pledges to do so in the name of Glorianna and her Kingdom Cleopolis – allegorical representations of Elizabeth and London. Noting that as Spenser "insists that the allegory is merely the pleasing surface of a national epic built on the firm foundation of unadorned history and ethical philosophy," Erickson, *Mapping the Faerie Queene* (see note 13), here 25 and 29, demonstrates how "Arthur embodies the criteria that define the traditional epic hero." Beyond his "traditional" value, his armor enables his stature as the perfect "English" hero, the one most suited to penetrate the Gaelic underworld and retain his chivalric bearings. Moreover, "Spenser saw that the myth of Arthur was of far greater significance to the history of England than random political facts about a minor figure out of ancient history." Patrick J. Cook, *Milton, Spenser, and the Epic Tradition* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 84–85, also comments on the allegorical significance of armor and weapons, acknowledging the bloody emblem on Redcrosse's shield as the "traditional attribute of the saint," and explaining further that "Spenser makes it much more prominent than in previous versions of the legend," a symbol of the "rituals whereby an aspiring knight entered chivalric orders" and so a "Protestant revision of the symbolism of the cross toward the salvational history of the individual," enabling Spenser to remind his readers that "although the individual justified by faith bears a shield that none can pierce, he must nevertheless regularly consult his moral compass." Finally, that blood-colored insignia on his shield assumes its symbolic importance: "Redcrosse needs this navigational assistance because he inhabits a disorienting world, and also because he overgoes earlier heroes by subsuming their many quests within his own as he journeys to an unprecedented number of traditional epic centres." Symbolically and imagistically, then, the motif of chivalric arms and weaponry serves to insulate the hero from the pitfalls encountered within the Faeryland otherworld.

Letter to Raleigh, Spenser elaborates on the role served by the historical Arthur, and this brief history serves a purpose described by Wayne Erickson as “a unifying narrative invention, an epic political quest set in the distant past, a myth of national destiny ... and an allegorical investigation of ethical action,” which shapes Spenser’s portrayal of his epic’s mythic hero.<sup>24</sup> In Book I, one finds the strongest justification for English colonialism, and the events of the later books serve as a powerful framework for the pro-colonial ideology that shapes the remainder of the epic. This message is particularly important in the framework of the 1596 version of *The Faerie Queene*, where Spenser’s motives in the later books seem less expressive of this confident nationalist ideology.

However, in Cantos IX–XII of Book I, one finds many of the Virgilian motifs that engage the nationalist imperatives of epic literature: the storied lineage of both Redcrosse and Arthur (whose heritage, being mythic, is more uncertain [I.IX.4]), the respective representatives of England’s historical and mythic pasts; the underworld *catabasis*, in which an ailing and distraught Redcrosse, seeking succor in the abode of despair, undergoes a physical and spiritual penitence to prepare him to realize his historical destiny as the perpetuator of English civility; and finally, the prophetic vision of Cleopolis, the glorious city of the realm of Gloriana. As beheld by Redcrosse, this image represents a New Jerusalem realized, and it then becomes his destiny to perpetuate these civilized values across the world. The ultimate vision of Book I, with its emphasis on unity and wholeness, is realized with his arrival to this “city on a hill” (IX.55), which Redcrosse spies first from afar. Conjoining aspects of Virgilian *catabasis* – revelations about lineage, confrontations with a shape-shifting other, prophetic visions – in this dark, brooding landscape of perpetual threats, Spenser likewise adapts it to a colonizing hegemony that served as the ideological foundation of his epic as well as his service to the Crown.

Stanzas 55–68 are especially important to express Spenser’s epic vision; in particular, Stanzas 65–66 show Faeryland as a place to forge figures and potential for the English nation – and therefore one that boasts its own political imperatives. After the fashion of the Virgilian underworld, where state heroism is created and where chivalric implements (weapons, armor) again represent the symbols of state-determined imperatives and virtues, we see the clarifying aspects of the catabaic journey. Moreover, explains Erickson, within Faeryland “various historical, legendary, and mythical times coexist,” and so “past, present, and future must be treated as relative, not absolute terms.” Thus, this world and landscape, “free from the burden of any particular time,” is used by Spenser “to coordinate the

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24 Erickson, *Mapping the Faerie Queene* (see note 13), 29.

historical circumstances,” as well as “the political and religious events that occur and are destined to occur in the places that compose the political geography surrounding Faeryland.”<sup>25</sup> In Canto X, this message is powerfully reinscribed by the process of Redcrosse’s penitence, and his lineage is also presented in proper Virgilian detail. Indeed, he is bestowed with the name of England’s patron saint, St. George, because he realizes his duty to serve the Virgin queen Una and to spread her civilizing influence (I.X.55–62). Moreover, his Saxon origins are described in fit detail (I.X.65), this lineage also serving a legitimizing function. As his recovery is deemed complete, he must now face his final challenge in battle that assures the destiny bestowed upon him. Ultimately, Redcrosse’s repentance is pivotal in establishing an uplifting tenor and the ideological imperatives of Book I. To reconcile Redcrosse’s purgation and penance with aims of English nationhood, one must understand Redcrosse’s penance as a process of Anglicizing, as honed through his Faeryland *catabasis*.

As Canto XI begins, Redcrosse encounters the Dragon, presented as a destroyer of nations (I.XI.14) which he must slay. As his “godly armes may blaze,” Redcrosse faces this ultimate combat and, though injured, is replenished by drinking from the well of life (I.XI.29). The clashing of metal resounding in their frenzied fight, a strengthened Redcrosse gains advantage (32–44) and finally slays the Dragon. In victory, he realizes his fitness to serve his queen and country in even greater service. In Canto XI 13–14, the Dragon is a threat to and a destroyer of nations, which the newly named St. George must slay. In stanzas 32–44, iron imagery is the dominant motif of St. George’s fight with the Dragon. The first hint of the influence of colonial activity and the first gesture to Spenser’s own colonial experience likewise occurs in Book I in Canto XII, when Redcrosse earns the blessing of Una’s father. Thus mandated to return to Faeryland for six years to serve Glorianna (Elizabeth), Redcrosse sits ensconced at Cleopolis (London, Court), serving at her bidding. The Dragon slain, the work of nation-building must nevertheless go on, and so the restless Redcrosse then departs again in Stanza 41. Meanwhile, Duessa appears to remind Redcrosse of his duties in the Celtic Fringe (30–32, Book X); Duessa and Archimago represent an ever-present threats, and so the hero’s mandate to overcome them is his ever present-duty. This is the message of the final Canto, in which Redcrosse’s journey ends when he learns that even in the moment of his greatest glory he must remain true to his greater obligations. These are revealed as his duty in Faeryland, where he must serve for a full six years before he is able to wed his beloved Una. Such is the grim work of colonial enterprise, and in agreeing to this seemingly unreasonable mandate, Redcrosse

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25 Erickson, *Mapping the Faerie Queene* (see note 13), 6.

embodies his willingness to do the hard work needed to spread English civility. While Archimago appears yet again to try to thwart Redcrosse and Una's marriage, he is himself thwarted and imprisoned, and a humbled knight leaves for Faeryland to begin his grim and determined obligation.

Several important patterns are established in Book I, which serve to frame the subsequent books of Spenser's epic. In the first canto of Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, a disoriented Redcrosse Knight leads Una and her servant to Archimago's hermitage after a grueling confrontation in the Den of Errors. Promising respite from the foreboding, cavernous landscapes which pervade the poem as a whole, and which are particularly stark in Book I, the shelter offers the shaken trio a night's rest in what seem to be unthreatening, austere, but spiritually-enriching environs. However, we soon learn that Redcrosse's victory over Error is less than total as he is, at Archimago's secretive prompting, soon led to perceive Una's unfaithfulness. Here begins his separation from her, a moment which initiates a *catabatic* process which ends with their reuniting, and Redcrosse's realizing his historical destiny and the finer points of courtly behavior.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Throughout Books I–III, arms and armor serve as agents of battle and implements of truth (after the fashion of the *Song of Roland*). Book I in particular recalls a heroic age of battle splendors, wars, and tournaments past. Redcrosse is “Y clad in mightie armes and siluer shielde” which bears “old dints of deepe wounds” and “the cruell markes of many a bloodie field” (I.I.1). The bloody battle stains he has endured are replicated on the “bloudie Crosse” he bears upon his breast, a “dear remembrance of his dying Lord” (I.I.2). The details harken back to England's crusading past and reinforce the notion that though the crusading ideology of centuries past is a distant precursor to the colonialist ideology of Spenser's world, its imagistic tenor serves a justifying function. David Lee Miller affirms this point, arguing that “[o]ne way of constructing a historical context for *The Faerie Queene* is to place the poem within the long emergence of corporate logic from the ecclesiastical into the secular domain, particularly the confused and often violent emergence of the sovereign state as a consolidation of medieval legal and political institutions powerful enough to rival the Church” (See David Lee Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988], 15). In this way, Redcrosse embodies the conjoined imperatives of ecclesiastical and secular power and thus serves as a crucial indicator of Spenser's investment in chivalric imagery. Moreover, in Book I, the moral imperatives are further justified by knighthood motifs. Redcrosse, the hope of the English nation, sees the detritus of fallen empires and hastily departs from the House of Pride. Chivalric splendor imagistically dominates Book I: battle, swordplay, armor, and pageant; Spenser clearly borrows from the past to articulate his vision of a future unified English church and state. While this pattern recurs throughout the epic, it is somewhat diminished in its later books, save for Book V. Also in Book I, a reader can note that Spenser is thoroughly indoctrinated in the symbolism, iconography, and philosophy of nation-building; but as one is only vaguely aware of the implications of the English colonial project in Ireland, his epic serves primarily as a vehicle for the expression of Elizabethan ideology. In later books, hints of his personal ruminations will emerge to complicate this confident picture. The English interaction with the Celtic fringe was to

In Book II, as in Book I, the land is populated by a mysterious other that also shows shape-shifting tendencies that tax the resolve of Guyon, the Book's principal figure. Beyond this obvious connection, there are several other epic parallels that conjoin the books: Like Redcrosse, Guyon embarks upon an underworld journey, one more graphic and more accommodating to the traditions of classical epic than any journey undertaken in Book I. In this journey, Guyon encounters the familiar underworld figure of Mammon, who, true to his classical and biblical forms, rifles through the underworld in search of metals of worth which feed his "pompous pride" (II.VII.16–17). Mammon's charges are engaged in the familiar pursuits of working metals and minting money in order to feed their courtly aspirations, as embodied in the figure of Ambition (II.VII 46–47), who resides most visibly in familiar courtly environs. And Guyon embarks on this *catabatic* episode, an underworld sojourn serving as a part of a larger journey, in which his earlier slaying of Pyrochles prompts a discourse on victory and defeat. These familiar motifs throughout Book II (II.V.15) supply historical and mythical perspective for the prophetic vision of "Troynovant," the "New London" which appears in Book X.<sup>27</sup>

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challenge the philosophical assumptions that are especially vivid in the heroic figures and moral obstacles they face and overcome in Book I. The colonialist agenda, established in Book I's Cantos X–XII, is restated in Book II's invocation/prelude (stanza 2). Overall, Book II's themes build upon the colonialist imperatives established in Book I while Spenser comments on the central virtues needed by the colonizers to resist the pull of the native other. Within these early scenes, the seductive pull of Faeryland is most evident.

27 This vision represents, according to Erickson, "the destined setting for the realization of the Tudor apocalypse" (see note 13, 78). Harry Berger, *Revisionary Play: Studies in the Spenserian Dynamics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 157, is more precise, identifying the "Virgilian perspective" of the episode and explaining how the "'antique Troian stocke'" (ix. 47) must be uprooted so that its seed may be scattered on new soil, its decadence washed away and vigor renewed by a return to the elemental matrix of ocean. The exiled race can only renew itself by confronting, fighting, and finally merging with its opposite .... Moving through war to concord, New Troy will finally assure its survival by taking into itself the youth or natural vigor of the conquered enemy." In this way, the recreation of an idealized English kingdom is as much a process of destruction as of creation. In the prophetic vision before Guyon, Spenser envisions a melding of the colonial self with the native other where the colonizers impose civility and draw from the primitive energies of the colonized. In order to reestablish the best aspects of their culture, the colonizers must first flush out and destroy its worst elements. This message is reinforced by the central imperative in Book II, which circulates around Guyon's encounter with the Bower of Blisse, that forbiddingly appealing locus of temptation where Acrasia assails the focused steadfastness of determined knights with her feminine wiles. Just as Redcross was to endure a period of testing to assure his moral fitness for the mandates of the Faerie Queene, Guyon's encounter with the Bowre is foreordained as early as Canto I (52), is mentioned again in Canto V (27), and remains his ultimate destination throughout. The Bowre, located in the House of Temperance, is



Just as Canto X from Book I depicted the process of Redcrosse's *catabasis* and described the prophetic vision he held for the English nation, Book II.X also depicts Spenser's Virgilian inclinations, as well as his effort to connect Roman and English empires. For example, Spenser's colonial vision is also pronounced in his effort to conflate the histories of England, Rome, and Europe in Book II.X. 72. Only when Guyon and Arthur are treated to the "Chronicle of Briton Kings," that combination of mythic and historical rulers of England which it is their destiny to serve and which they encounter in the House of Temperance, does Guyon become fully prepared for his encounter with Acrasia in the Bowre of Blis, an attempt at seduction that he must resist. By Canto XII Guyon, fortified by the visions of his historical destiny and confident in the colonial imperatives which Spenser has hinted at throughout Book II, begins self-righteously destroying this den of iniquity (XII, 42). Placed in the final Canto, it stands as the ultimate heroic act of Book II. With the Bowre destroyed, the virtue of Temperance is held preeminently as central to the colonizing imperatives envisioned by Spenser.

The pattern of conflating great societies according to their imperial history is reinforced in Book III. Embodying the virtue of Chastity, the woman warrior Britomart likewise undergoes a set of experiences in her travels that prepare her for a role in nation-building. As in Books I and II, Book III presents both the underworld imagery and the historical vision which must be properly regarded by the heroine as she realizes her destiny. However, even more so than in Books I and II, Book III contains both direct and indirect references to Ireland and to the English colonial efforts there. In Canto II, for example, readers are introduced for the first time to the figure of Artegall, the allegorical representation of Lord Grey. In this context, Artegall is equated with Achilles (25) in Spenser's effort to connect Troy with the Eastern Empires, and also with English colonial expansion (III.III.22–23). Artegall is also beloved and pursued by Britomart, who seeks to realize with him an ideal of chastity not founded on the notion of abstinence, but rather on an idealized notion of monogamous love. Such an ideal stands in contrast to the loose sexual mores which the English found in the communal order of Gaelic society. In this union, the prophetic vision of history will reveal the re-institution of English rule in Ireland; such a vision will, according to the Magician Glauce (who reveals the prophecy), replicate the actions of "Great *Gormond*," who, "[h]auing with huge mightiness Ireland subdewd" (III.III.33). Ultimately,

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also where Guyon learns of the "Chronicle of Homeland." In this description, Spenser shows his cartographer's eye and appreciation for native geography, which he will bring to a description of the Irish landscapes in Books IV–VI.

Britomart heads into battle seeing herself as the protector of “the royal seed, the antique Trojan blood / Whose Empire lenger here, then euer any stood” (III. III.42). Her arming scene, in stanzas 59–62, represents another echo of Homeric and Virgilian epic.

The pattern continues in the Book’s later Cantos, and the Spenserian habit of conflating the elements of Virgilian epic continue to augment his own colonialist leanings. Learning in Book IX (stanza 38) of a “third kingdom,” a “Troynovant,” or “New Troy,” that is to arise from the English nation,<sup>28</sup> Britomart, like Redcrosse and Guyon, must be assured that she is fit to do this work. In Book XI, she is reassured by the ornately detailed tapestries she sees in the House of Busyraine, cosmic images which reinforce her need to “[b]e bold, be bold,” but also to “[b]e not too bold.” Upon such beliefs she facilitates her rescue of Amoret, reuniting her with her beloved Scudamor. This romantic (re)union embodies the virtue of chaste monogamy which Britomart herself seeks with Artegall, and which provides narrative closure to Books I–III of the 1590 *Faerie Queene*.

Within the collective effect of Books I–III the various strands of Spenser’s thought—as represented by his Platonic inclinations, his attention to Virgilian influences, his gestures toward native English cultural traditions, and his own colonial experience—combine to articulate a colonialist agenda which places England as the inheritor of the imperial tradition. It is likewise arguable that the “real” epic dimension of Spenser’s poem is most discernibly confined to its first three books, which comment on England’s effort to subdue and colonize Ireland, and which demonstrate a fuller epic imperative than Books IV–VII. Readers see at the conclusion of Book III a “definite celebratory closure,” in which the ending embrace of Scudamor and Amoret and the continuing chastity of Britomart

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<sup>28</sup> Spenser’s desire to connect Britain’s lineage back to Troy parallels Virgil’s desire to connect the Augustan Caesar dynasty back to Aeneas, and stands as a key illustration, identified by Bates, “*The Faerie Queene*: England’s National Monument” (see note 12), here 141, of the legitimizing function of lineage within Spenser’s epic project. By equating Troy and “Troynovant” (London), this connection “allows (Spenser) to locate the name of his nation and people in a distant heroic past. Virgil does the same thing, of course, when he suggests in Book 1 of the *Aeneid* that Julius Caesar derived his name ... (ultimately) from Ilus, the legendary founder of Ilium or Troy. The etymological link is clearly part of Virgil’s overt strategy to authorize the ruling family by tracing its (implicitly unbroken) connection with the ancient heroic past ... Spenser is consciously employing the classic epic device of the *translatio imperii* here (while adding) a humanist belief in etymology” as a means to trace the “original meanings” of names and words and so achieve the ultimate goal of “legitimization”: “The True meaning of a word could be verified and validated by going back to its origins just as a family could be legitimated, indeed, authorized to rule.”

represent the perpetuation of English morals and virtues. In this way, argues Susan Wofford, “the 1590 *Faerie Queene* stands out dramatically against the poem as a whole,” and Spenser himself had yet to make use of “aesthetics of incompletion”<sup>29</sup> which mitigated those narrative threats to the linear progression of his epic and served him as he moved toward the publication of the 1596 version.

Throughout these first three books, Spenser’s epic heroes undergo a process of education that enables them to serve as the guardians of English values, beliefs, and civility – in short, of “Englishness” that must endure in opposition to the threats and temptations posed by the “Gaelic other.” Like the poet and his colonial cohorts, they are entrusted with the duty of making cultural and political inroads into this dark, mysterious, and morally corrupting world, and can only briefly enjoy respite in remote outposts that are constantly assailed by this corrupting other. The brooding, otherworld landscapes of Books I–III represent a space of perpetual *catabasis*, marked by hidden caverns and realms of forbidden temptation and are peopled by intemperate and immoderate personalities who threaten the resolve of the sturdy English heroic temperament. As guardian of this civilizing ideology, the Spenserian hero is therefore mandated to aspire to the larger vision of a colonized Ireland while navigating a threatening landscape of Gaelic otherness; and in addition to the threats posed by this world, Spenser also saw the damning consequences of his colonial forbearers to resist them. The Anglo-Norman colonizers of earlier centuries, having succumbed to what Spenser saw as the immoderate appeals of native Irish society, represented a disastrous vision of the consequences of a failed colonial enterprise. Their corrupt world, implies Spenser, lacks the moral imperatives expressed in *The Faerie Queene* I–III, one shaped as much by steadying influences of Plato and Virgil as by the poet’s own belief in a resolute English cultural character. Portraying the struggles of heroic characters journeying through corrupting lands, Spenser underscored the imperial dimensions of epic by stressing the importance of origins and lineage, by associating specific topographical landmarks with historical significance, and by instilling moral imperatives into the proliferation of empire. In this way, he transformed epic in ways that would influence the work of a poet writing about eight decades later, one prompted to portray that ultimate story of origins in terms likewise engaging with the themes of battle, history, landscape, and colony.

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<sup>29</sup> See Susan Wofford, “*The Faerie Queene*, Books I–III,” *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser*, ed. Andrew Hadfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 106–23; here 22.

## Mercantile *Catabasis*: *Paradise Lost* and the Rhetoric of Trade, Commerce, and Early Industry

Among Milton's many literary credits, his standing as an admiring reader of Spenser bears scrutiny because his comments on the latter's epic project shed discernible light on his own. Referencing his predecessor as "our sage and serious Spenser," Milton's most noteworthy reference to *The Faerie Queene*, expressed in a considered passage about the pedagogical virtues of Guyon's journey through the Bowre of Bliss episode, occurs in *Aeropagatica*. Here his comments reveal what is actually an evocative misreading, one shedding light on his reading of the journeys of Spenser's characters through the beguiling Faeryland landscape, and therefore one revealing his conception of the larger quest of the epic hero.<sup>30</sup> Inaccurately referencing the Palmer's guidance while crediting Guyon's

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**30** This passage has been discussed by a field of noteworthy Spenser and Milton scholars, including Stanley Fish (*Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967, 1997]), 20–21; Paul Alpers ("Bower of Bliss," *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. Albert C. Hamilton [Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1990]), 104–07; and Maureen Quilligan (*Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983]), 41–78. Their contributions are effectively summarized by David Lee Miller, "The Faerie Queene (1590)," *A Critical Companion to Spenser Studies*, ed. Bart van Es (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 139–65; here 150. Noting that "two features of this passage have drawn attention," Miller explains that the first is "Milton's sense that the best teaching does not mirror doctrine passively but shows it embattled. This has become a key note in modern criticism of both poets" (i.e., Spenser and Milton, as shown in the work of Fish and Alpers). Citing Quilligan's contributions, Miller continues: "[t]he second feature of the passage to have drawn attention is, of course, Milton's error about the Palmer, who does not accompany Guyon into Mammon's cave. Quilligan ... relates this error to the self-critical reading strategies demanded by Spenserian allegory. In effect, we must always have the Palmer with us, internalized as a way of engaging with the text." These arguments reinforce the prospect that Milton seeks to challenge his readers, portraying for us a catabatic journey inverted and transformed, one modeled on the conventions of epic but significantly modifying them, one undertaken not by his human heroes but instead by Satan, his central protagonist. Beyond this trio of seminal works, scholarly assessments of the character of Milton's reading of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, as well as of his *View of the Present State of Ireland* – and the implications of Spenser's influence on Milton's own epic project – include Linda Gregerson, *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser, Milton, and the English Protestant Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 8, who argues that "[f]rom the erotic and vocational paradigms of Petrarchan lyric, from the interpretative porousness of allegory, from the redundancies, deferrals, and overdeterminations of romances, Spenser contrives a powerful corrective to the monumentalizing (and idolatrous) impetus of epic poetry," while Milton "adapts the cognitive advantages of these hybrid models to the much narrower space of the epic simile ... plac(ing) maximum pressure upon the language that is itself a symptom of the Fall from Paradise." Willy Maley, *Nation, State and Empire in English Renaissance Literature: Shakespeare to*

tested abstinence, Milton employs the memorable term “excremental whiteness” to describe the cultivation “a blank virtue, not a pure” which is cultivated by a careful, critical reader who has “intangled”<sup>31</sup> with, or rigorously tested, the themes of Spenser’s work and the virtues cultivated by its heroic characters. The detail hints intriguingly that in his reading of *The Faerie Queene* Milton saw details appropriate to his own epic visions in a narrative that emphasized the guided journey of (self-) discovery (after the fashion of Virgil’s escorting the pilgrim Dante through Purgatory), rather than the display of heroic valor, as its key component. Like the *Faerie Queene*, Milton’s epic “intangles” variously with the traditions of underworld imagery. Capturing the underworld motifs of the classical, early Christian, late medieval, and early Renaissance worlds, he also depicts his underworld in terms familiar to the early modern age, an underworld colonized unnaturally as a site for resource exploitation. Thus Milton articulates a contradictory notion of heroism appropriate to and reflecting the “excremental

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Milton (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 5, argues that “[w]hether or not we see Milton as a poet against empire or an advocate of colonialism, like the ‘sage and serious’ Spenser whom he so admired, the fact remains that between the Irish question and the British problem, the undiscovered country is England – unrevolutionary England.” See also: “How Milton and Some Contemporaries Read Spenser’s *View*,” *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534–1660*, ed. Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Maley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 191–208; here 203–04, where Maley argues that Milton’s reading of the former work, “written by an author he acknowledged as a greater teacher than Aquinas, reinforced cultural prejudices probably first imbibed in his undergraduate days at Cambridge,” thus reinforcing his “colonial disposition”; and Maley, “A View of the Present State of Ireland (1596; 1633),” *A Critical Companion to Spenser Studies*, ed. Bart van Es (see note 30), here 214, where the author, describing Milton as “[t]he *View*’s first and most famous recorded reader,” assesses the reactions of contemporary and slightly later readers of Spenser’s dialogue. Christopher Bond, *Spenser, Milton, and the Redemption of the Epic Hero* (Latham, MD: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 92, identifies a number of shared characteristics that link the two authors’ conceptions of heroism, expressed in their epics, as achieved through struggle and self-education: “Milton’s conception of heroism – that it must include the error and humiliation that instruct the hero in Christian virtue – is remarkably close to Spenser’s notion of a Knight who, in order to educate the reader in a particular virtue, must show us how hard that virtue is to attain.”

**31** This term, purposefully misspelled, is used by Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin* (see note 30), 22, to describe the rhetorical challenges that Milton, through Satan’s voice and actions, presents to readers: “By first ‘intangling’ us in the folds of Satan’s rhetoric, and then ‘informing us better’ in ‘due season,’ Milton forces us to acknowledge the personal relevance of the Arch-fiend’s existence; and, in the process, he validates dramatically one of western man’s most durable commonplaces, the equation of rhetorical appeal (representative of the world of appearances) with the weakness of the ‘natural man,’ that is, with the ‘defects of our hearers.’” Again, the passage underscores the challenge that Milton’s reinvention of epic motifs presents to readers inclined to understand the catabatic journey in strictly heroic terms.

whiteness” of a reimagined epic struggle. This struggle, first rooted in spatial terms as colonial conquest, conjoins with Satan’s spiritual struggle in which his quest for clarity is achieved as his travels proceed.

In this way Milton’s underworld stands, like Dante’s Hell and Spenser’s Faeryland, as a space mirroring the economic and political realities of the poet’s world – in this case, as a repository of banished deplorables whose transgressions, expressed in images associated with warfare, mining, nautical traffic, landscape disruption, and resource exploitation, speak to and reflect the anxieties associated with increasingly sophisticated economic and fraught political circumstances. From this subterranean space, Satan’s catabatic journey upward stands as a reimagined version of the true heroic emphasis of his epic, one conjoined with but in opposition to the spiritual trials and resolutions shown by Adam and Eve. His journey serves ultimately to reinforce his self-inflicted torment, while in the wake of their disobedience, their own agonized tribulations enable Milton to stress the first couple’s slow path toward redemption and recovery as the fittest material for his own epic project.<sup>32</sup>

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32 My effort to advance Milton’s epic conceits as both an embrace and rejection of Virgilian motifs therefore runs contrary to the compelling positions expressed recently by Timothy Windsor, “The War in Heaven: Milton’s Apotheosis of Epic Catabasis,” *The Journal of Religious History, Literature and Culture* 3.1 (2017): 100–21; here 100 and 105–06, which positions Milton’s use of the catabatic motif in terms more directly imitative of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, as the narrative centerpiece of *Paradise Lost*’s twelve-book structure. Arguing that “passional, descent-and-return patterns inform the thematic, as well as sometimes structural centre of his poems,” Windsor explains firstly that this pattern, evident as early as Milton’s *Nativity Ode*, stands as one of the hallmarks of his poetic career. In *Paradise Lost*, then, Milton “aligns ... (the death and Resurrection of the Son) with the center of Virgilian epic ..., not as a *copy* of *Aeneid* VI but its heavenly, apotheosized, prototype.” This position is supported effectively, invoking Northrop Frye’s observations (expressed in *The Return of Eden* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965]) to establish that “[i]n *Paradise Lost* we thus find all of Frye’s catabatic criteria gathered into one epic; it features a Christological descent-and-return expressed through the three-day sign of Jonah structure, with the suggestion of the Harrowing of Hell – all ‘dropped into the middle’ (to borrow Frye’s words) of the epic, in the very place consecrated by Virgil to catabasis: book six of a twelve-book epic.” Even as Frye himself stops sort of articulating this precise reading, Windsor reinforces it by comparing the lines of Book VI 516–20 with *Aeneid* VI 5–6 and then arguing for additional intertextual parallels with Virgilian, Homeric, and Scriptural sources. As my reading of Satan’s journey places more emphasis on his coverage of spatial distances and his encounters with new topographies that bring forth the conflating of mental and spatial terrains as a consequence, I think that Windsor’s reading diminishes the significance of the spatial boundaries that Satan transgresses and the distance that he covers in his epic journey. Focused most fully on Milton’s observance of Virgilian motifs, rather than his transformation (and inversion) of them, therefore, Windsor’s argument therefore provides a useful counterpoint to the one I advance here.

If we acknowledge the Romantic conceit that Satan stands as the heroic centerpiece of Milton's epic, we might be inclined to count his self-condemnation, realized in his first beholding of God's Edenic creation, as a heroic gesture of perpetual defiance. His resolve to exist in "infinite wrath, and infinite despair," expressed in his determined declaration that "Myself am Hell" (4. 74–75),<sup>33</sup> therefore stands as an inverted expression of heroic idealism.<sup>34</sup> In this light, his subsequent journey upward inverts traditional catabatic motifs, and is undertaken as a series of "mural breaches"<sup>35</sup> that define first his banishment, and, later, his ascent and return through chaotic realms to realize his imperial destiny to corrupt Eden and to sow discord among humankind. Meanwhile, all significant demonic activity in Milton's underworld – the building of palaces, the plotting for revenge in various parliamentary councils, the trailblazing journey through Purgatory toward Eden – is undertaken by Satan and his condemned minions in this perverse, corrosive spirit.

In Milton's vision of hell, we see a dimly-lit Tartarean locus where deliberative bodies debate vengeance, and where self-aggrandizing monuments are wrested from disturbed landscapes; but this underworld is also a space absent of any psychic reconfigurations, heroic epiphanies, or apocalyptic visions – we see only demonic resolutions, individual and collective, to promote further conflict, disruption, and despair. With Satan's catabatic journey upward, through Chaos and

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33 Quotations taken from John Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1957). *Paradise Lost* accessible also online via: [https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading\\_room/pl/book\\_1/text.shtml](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_1/text.shtml) (last accessed on Nov. 27, 2017).

34 David Quint, *Inside Paradise Lost: Reading the Designs of Milton's Epic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 7, remarks that "Satan's story is the old epic dispensation, the search for temporal power as a zero-sum game driven by envy and the desire for glory above one's peers. It can only culminate, if not be satisfied, in kingship, war, and destruction – and in alienation from God in a literal or mental hell, the latter identical to remorse, the 'restless thoughts' that return to torment the despairing fallen angels as the hellhounds sired by Death return to torment Sin." In offering this assessment, Quint positions Satan's brand of heroism, rooted in defiance, battle, and conquest, as an outdated version of epic heroism that Milton juxtaposes with the Grace shown in the Son, sacrifice, and particularly in the struggles of Eve, and Adam, who, in the wake of their disobedience choose sacrifice, loyalty, and devotion to one another as expressions of spiritual heroism rooted in Godly virtues.

35 This term is introduced by Rebecca M. Rush, "Satan's Mural Breaches: Transgression and Self-Violation in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies* 54 (2013): 107–35; here 107 and 110. Rush explains that "Milton populates the cosmos of *Paradise Lost* with a surprising number of walls and boundaries ... (and) Milton's God carefully delineates the boundaries of the three realms (i.e., heaven, paradise, and hell), only to allow his archenemy to breach them with ease." These boundaries, and Satan's violations – his "mural breaches" of them – therefore "contribute to Milton's justification of God by illustrating that evil punishes itself – its violation of boundaries is a violation of self that results in disintegration and discord."

into Eden, and serpentine return, he only strengthens his resolve to replicate the worst aspects of this subterranean world in terrestrial spaces. In short: unlike the underworld visions of earlier epic writers, Milton's notion of catabasis is inverted, cast not as a heroic journey downward to realize clarity, but as an anti-heroic journey upward to create discord and confusion. Beyond the "irony of apparent ascent"<sup>36</sup> ascribed to this journey, it stands neither *anabasis* or as *catabasis* as understood in their traditional forms. Instead, Satan's ascent and return, undertaken in rebellion to achieve a specific and foreordained act of vengeance against God, conjoins the acts of travel and transformation in his own epiphanic realization of his self-identification of aligned place and purpose: "Which way I flie is Hell: Myself am Hell" (4.75). Having created in Eden new levels of anxiety that come with Adam and Eve's first disobedience, Satan wrests hell from its purely spatial dimension and transforms it, for himself and for humankind, into an psychological condition that exists beyond spatial, temporal, or worldly boundaries: "[t]o which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n" (4.78). Beginning with his entry into Chaos in Book 2, Satan's journey culminates in his successful staging of the poem's "whole Subject" (Book 1, Argument) with the disobedience and fall of humankind in Book 9 and then concludes with his triumphant return in Book 10. These developments both maintain and expand the Virgilian conventions of the underworld journey as the centerpieces of *Paradise Lost*'s twelve book epic structure.

For Milton, the fallen world stands an expansive realm of political deliberation, landscape disruption, industrial proliferation, and colonizing exploration, and the bounded, protected, Edenic world inhabited by Adam and Eve is a space (initially) of fidelity, vine-tending, fruit salads, and instructional dialogue where the doctrines of divine obedience between God and humankind are reinforced. As the fallen angels' fated firearms inevitably fail in celestial warfare, they are routed and banished to the underworld, where they resettle its environs after the fashion of a colonial outpost. Establishing their base in the subterranean haunt of Pandemonium, they begin the process of transforming its landscape and exploiting its resources, rebuilding their skills as miners, metalworkers, builders, and artisans, but also as magistrates, merchants, and counselors. In contrast to the established and eternal architecture of God's celestial city, the fallen angels' efforts to construct Pandemonium are revealed as impractical, gaudy, and misdirected, but nonetheless purposeful and efficient. In casting these celestial rebels against the "natural" hierarchies of Heaven, Milton portrays them in turns as military commanders, explorers, merchants, miners, metalworkers and politicians, their

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36 McCarty, "Catabatic Structure" (see note 2), 293.



banishment reflecting a form of class-based resentment,<sup>37</sup> an eternal reminder of their own pre-ordained condemnation.

In this light, Satan's vow to raise "“impious War in Heaven and Battle proud”" (1. 41–43) against the "“Omnipotent to Arms”" (1. 49) is essentially a rebellion against the nepotism and privilege of celestial hierarchy, his "“vain attempt”" to assert his merit before the Son representing a doomed challenge to the celestial power structures of God's Kingdom and landing him in "“Adamantine Chains and Penal Fire”" (1. 50). The simile used by Milton here shows a purposeful effort to cast Satan's violation of Edenic perfection as a conjoined military and economic exploitation of the agrarian landscape. It serves further to juxtapose the agrarian

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37 Many of these contexts are developed in J. Martin Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic: Paradise Lost and the Discourse of Colonialism* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 4–5. Most importantly, Evans establishes that the poet "seems to have conceived the principal sites and characters in the poem in essentially colonial terms. Both Hell and the Garden of Eden function as cosmic outposts of Heaven, designed to serve in the first case as a receptacle for its outcasts and in the second as an extension of its imperial power .... Indeed, the poem as a whole reenacts on the cosmic stage many of the central events that took place during the conquest of the New World: the voyage of discovery, the initial encounter with naked innocents, the delivery of the *requerimiento*, the establishment of the colony, the search for gold, the cultivation of land, the conversion of the natives, the dispossession of the indigenous population, the triumphant return home." Neal Forsythe, *The Satanic Epic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 57–58, locates Milton's innovations of the epic genre in the fact that he "moves the genre towards modernity, since Satan's recognition of his difference from the other angels is marked by the extraordinary decision to have Satan invent gunpowder and artillery" and "to have warfare itself pass from the heroic code of the ancient and medieval worlds to the logistical battles of the modern world, where what wins is not courage but 'superior firepower,' (and) where the enemy is always other and depersonalized, even demonized .... This new sense of Satanic danger, of a world gotten out of hand, pervades the poem." In addition, David Quint's *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 14, remains a groundbreaking work of scholarship. Providing justification for historicist-oriented readings of epic imagery, this work serves first as the author's "attempt to link the epic text with its historical occasion (which) investigates *allusion*, both topical and poetic," while also considering "the links by which the text already declares its connection to its political situation and to earlier epic tradition." Quint's more recent study, *Inside Paradise Lost* (see note 34), here 1, assesses the poem's ultimately subversive character, expressed in the broadest terms, that "[t]he message of *Paradise Lost* is: make love, not war"; further, it "pretends to begin the epic tradition by retelling events that preceded those of all earlier epics," but "ends the epic genre by condemning its traditional subject matters, war and empire." Quint further defines the poem's "central heroic act" as "Adam's choosing love for Eve ... over obedience to God." Therefore, "[i]n making us think twice at all about this choice, in appearing even to ratify it, *Paradise Lost* revises its biblical subject matter just as radically as it revises epic." In this light, Quint's study opens up space for assessing Milton's radical reinversions of the motif of *catábasis* and of the motivations for and details evident in Satan's upward journey to and return from Eden.

rhythms of God's celestial creations with Satan's alchemical, pre-industrial, and martial violations of the subterranean and later, the terrestrial landscapes in his effort to rebel against divine hierarchies. Even though his doomed independence would earn him the admiration of the Romantic poets some hundred and thirty-odd years later, his actions are depicted to represent those of the misguided speculator – the early capitalist – whose violations of his world's orders are doomed by his inability to “know his place.” Nevertheless, in Milton's condemnations of the pride, ambition, and desire for autonomy shown by Satan in rebellion against the celestial hierarchies, hints are visible that connect these theological mandates to the economic and political circumstances that circumscribe the poet's world.

Beyond the military idioms of coup and banishment used by the narrator to describe Satan's rebellion, Satan's descriptions of himself and his “Host of Rebel Angels” (1. 37–38) also capture the rhetoric of upstart merchants and tradesmen who are essential to, but excluded from, the noble power networks as the group of fallen angels bespeak their banishment from the celestial city. In short, Satan's ruminations to himself, as well as his exhortations to his cohorts in rebellion, consistently are cast in idioms that show how Milton conceives of his defiance as a personal slight that soon assumes political, military, and economic dimensions when God privileges the Son within his celestial hierarchy. Once banished from that seat of celestial power, Satan assumes forms associated with early capitalism, defined by industry, travel, and colonizing – the recognition of new resources, the settlement and conquest of new terrains, and the navigation of unfamiliar waters to locate new markets. In his address to his compatriot Beelzebub, Satan reveals that, as “the first Archangel, Great in Power, / In favor and preeminence” (5. 660–61), he is unable to accept God's readjustment of His celestial “Empire” (1114), which subordinates Satan's position in both spatial and psychological terms.

Satan's inability to ask for grace is subsequently noted by God in Book V, where He attributes it to Satan's “envy against the Son of God”; His subsequent rebellion is due to both “Deep malice” and “disdain” (666). Upon beholding Eden from afar in the beginning of Book IV and conscious of his perpetual banishment from it, Satan acknowledges his “Pride and Worse Ambition” (40) as the source of his fallen state.

Later, Satan ruminates on his violation in economic terms, employing an idiom that casts it as a breach of monetary contract, a “debt of endless gratitude, / So burdensome, still paying, still to owe” (4. 52–53). Having neglected to pay his celestial superiors in the currency of respect and subjection, Satan reinvents the celestial hierarchy of heaven in hell, redefining hell as a state of mind, rather than as the physical environs of that “deep tract of Hell” (1. 27) occupied by the fallen angels. Milton connects the underworld with familiar worldly environments which are cast in the imagery of mining, metalworking, battle, and mineral technology. In short, Milton comments on hell as an imaginative recreation of the workplace environments

occupied by those like Satan, whose ethic is governed by self-determination, rather than by a doctrine of assumed merit. And Satan's subsequent despair, privately realized in his moments of rumination, results from his awareness of the uncertain autonomy that those seeking to rise above their stations must negotiate.

Milton's effort to portray the fallen angels' rebellion as a violation of divine hierarchy assumes vocational and commercial dimensions. The various idioms the poet uses show how Satan's position aligns with that of the early capitalist visionary, an economic, technological, or ideological insurgent, his violations of established class orders meriting a transgression of social boundaries and a navigation of uncharted social waters. The growing merchant and industrialist classes, their collective wealth accumulating and their social influence increasing, were likewise forced outside of conventional protocols and practices to find new spheres of influence within reinventing social hierarchies. Privately acknowledging the futility of the course he has taken to challenge the potency of the omnipotent, Satan feels a comparable kind of anxiety about his uncertain place. He turns his thoughts first toward his own "Infinite wrath, and infinite despair" (4. 74). More importantly, he realizes his obligations toward those seduced by his ambitions, and resolves to mask his despair by putting on a brave face, "boasting (that he) could subdue / Th' Omnipotent" (4. 84–85). In heading into the uncharted waters of rebellion, Satan demonstrates an extreme degree of despair that, in milder forms, captures the uncertainties of proto-capitalists seeking to establish their autonomy in a competitive mercantile environment still governed by King, Crown, and established nobility.

Within this range of tensions, the motif of travel becomes central to Satan's new identity. Embarking on a sojourn through those underworld terrains in Book 2, he departs from Pandemonium and blazes a lonely navigational course through Purgatory on his mission to corrupt Eden. Drawing close to the gates of Hell on his journey to Earth, the apostate angel beholds a vision described in conjoined nautical and mercantile images:

As when farr off at Sea a Fleet descri'd  
Hangs in the Clouds, by AEQUINOCTIAL Winds  
Of TERNATE and TIDORE, whence Merchants bring  
Thir spicie Drugs: they on the trading Flood  
Through the wide ETHIOPIAN to the Cape  
Ply stemming nightly toward the Pole. So seem'd  
Farr off the flying Fiend: (2.636–43)

Milton portrays Satan's approach to Hell's gate in terms that overtly recall the violent Portugese, and later Spanish and Dutch enterprises in the Indonesian spice islands of Ternate and Tidore in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The passage captures the sense of impending violation that is to come, and critics of his epic consistently regard it as the most vivid statement of Milton's antipathy toward merchants and mercantile activity in a work where navigational, nautical, mercantile, and colonial motifs define the depictions of underworld travel.

In another noteworthy example two books later, Milton uses nautical imagery again in depicting Satan's return journey to Eden in terms of the class dimensions and proto-industrial images of his underworld. Having surveyed the Edenic landscape and hatched his plan to tempt Adam and Eve, Satan is described once again in conjoined nautical and mercantile terms two books later, as a home-ward-bound sailor enjoying the sweet aromas of his cargo in eager anticipation of the profits they will bring:

As when to them who saile  
Beyond the *Cape of Hope*, and now are past  
*Mozambic*, off at Sea North-East windes blow  
*Sabea*n Odours from the spicie shoare  
Of *Arabie* the blest, with such delay  
Well pleas'd they slack thir course, and many a League  
Chear'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles.  
So entertaind those odorous sweets the Fiend  
Who came thir bane .... (4.159–67)

In these two examples, Milton expresses a clear effort to conjoin Satan's underworld journey with images associated with merchant trade and traffic, underscoring the connections between *catabasis* and commerce.<sup>38</sup>

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**38** It is worth highlighting the prospect that the Council of State's deliberations over Navigation Acts of 1651 are encoded in *Paradise Lost* as the governing structures of Satan's underworld, which shares with the Commonwealth's Parliament a struggle for legitimacy and a process of creation forged in violence and revolt. After the fashion of the Commonwealth's State Council, Satan and his fallen minions debate a comparable agenda, advocating seeking and insuring developing markets, and allowing for exploitation of resources and proliferation of commerce. More importantly, like the early Commonwealth Parliament that Milton served, the first concern of Satan's fallen minions is also survival, and their organic establishment of a functioning underworld state draws notable imagistic motifs and idioms from Parliamentary proceedings and debates. Both Satan and the Commonwealth Parliament reject established kingship in favor of autonomous governance, and both show the sporadic and haphazard process of legislative debate. Su Fang Ng, "Pirating Paradise: Alexander the Great, the Dutch East Indies, and Satanic Empire in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies* 52 (2011): 59–91; here 63 and 71, emphasizes Milton's position within the climate of nautical conflict and the proliferation of piracy in his reading of Milton's epic, arguing that this emphasis "sharpens Milton's representation of Satan as merchant-adventurer," enabling a "depiction of Satan as both oriental tyrant and Indies merchant, as emperor and pirate," a duality which stands as "not two differing or contradictory characterizations but aspects of the same thing: tyranny." Further, Ng explains that "prevalent anti-Dutch discourse

Like the Commonwealth's early Parliament, Satan's rebellion depends on new lands to transform into markets and to despoil native landscapes for resources and to establish sites of colonial enterprise. Finally, after the fashion of a Parliamentary official dealing with overseas diplomats, Satan assigns ranks to his subordinates in terms that underscore the connections between sea navigation and motifs of council deliberation. In this way, the most telling residue of Milton's period of Secretaryship, with its heavy responsibilities in shaping those confrontational navigational policies, appears in *Paradise Lost* in his notable reliance on terms associated conjointly with state protocol, debate, negotiation, deliberation, and nautical governance. These terms are invoked specifically as Satan addresses his charges while advocating for his policy of defiance toward heaven. Specifically, Milton refers to the noun "council" and its verbal corollary "counsel" (and a field of variants) on several noteworthy occasions,<sup>39</sup> regularly in contexts that invoke echoes of navigational policy debates. Contextually, his use of the term suggests the resonance of these Parliamentary councils on his imagination. Most notably, Satan, in the fashion of Parliament, opens the floor to the fallen minions. Mammon goes first, and concludes by "dismissing quite / All thoughts of Warr" (2.282–83). His arguments are well received, and his speech concludes with a nautical motif as the gathered "Assembly" (2.285) responds with the "hoarse cadence" of "Sea-faring men orewatcht" (2. 287–88). Defined by his pillaging of underworld resources to build Pandemonium, Mammon is among Satan's followers most clearly associated with a trade – mining. When seated in council, Mammon most vividly recalls Milton's observations made to Oldenburg emissary Hermann Mylius about his cohorts in Cromwell's Parliament, those "mechanics, soldiers, servants, strong and keen enough, but entirely ignorant of public political affairs," who seemingly tested the learned Secretary's patience as

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provided the language to critique the dangerous tendency of trade to turn into oppressive mercantile empire. This language could be used to make broader points about just government and commercial endeavor."

**39** Charting the etymology of the word "council" from its Latin origins, the OED notes two different strains of meaning in OF uses of the word. One refers to the traditional definition of any deliberative body or assembly, while the other has more explicit ecclesiastical overtones. Milton's varying spellings of the word perhaps reflect the point that in its historical OE and ME uses, "the two words were, from the beginning, completely confused" and were "treated as one." First recorded in the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle* in 1123, the word refers consistently either to any administrative, governmental, or otherwise deliberative body or assembly, or to any administrative gathering. The act of meeting in clandestine or secretive contexts is occasionally implicit as well. In his various uses of the term Milton covers this range of meanings. See OED: council, n. Second edition, 1989; online version (Mar. 2012), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/42589> (last accessed on Dec. 29, 2017). Earlier version first published in the *New English Dictionary*, 1893.

he translated their documents and prepared their correspondence.<sup>40</sup> More importantly, as the fallen angels debate a few lines later, Beelzebub begins his deliberations before the assembled crowd, “Princely counsel in his face yet shon, / Majestick though in ruin” (2.299–305). In these passages governmental motifs frame the fallen angels’ exchanges in their various underworld councils; presented in deliberative language and often with accompanying nautical imagery, these motifs ultimately reinforce the mercantile character of Satan’s catabatic journey.

While Adam and Eve engage in mutually instructive dialectical exchanges between themselves and with Raphael, political motifs resonate within Satan’s dialogue, serving as the prominent discursive features of Hell and framing the debates of the fallen angels. As suggested in the passage above, allusions to “counsel” or “council” invariably preclude battle, conflict, nautical exploration, or military strategizing within *Paradise Lost*’s epic narrative. The terms appear especially prominently throughout Books 1 and 2, standing out most notably within the first few lines of Satan’s initial speech in Book 1. Conjoining the terms of merchant associations with an attitude of defiant opposition, he proclaims the “Glorious Enterprize” (1. 89) that defines their cause, thus establishing a discursive climate which echoes Parliament’s laborious debates and contentious correspondence over nautical policy, culminating in the bellicose Navigation Acts of 1651.<sup>41</sup> Satan calls for the “United thoughts and counsels” (1. 88)” in this “mutual league” (1. 86) with his fallen minions who anticipate the conflicts that will follow. Satan then boasts how “the angry Victor hath recall’d / His Ministers of vengeance and pursuit / Back to the Gates of Heav’n” (1.169–71), a measure calculated to “disturb” God’s “inmost counsels from thir destind aim” (1.167–68).

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<sup>40</sup> See Robert Thomas Fallon, *Milton in Government* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 64. During this exchange, Milton commented to Mylius about the limits of the Council members, those “home-grown” “mechanics” and “soldiers” whose limited experiences slowed the gears of government. Even as Fallon argues that these “frequently quoted” remarks to Mylius reveal a “sympathetic understanding of the limitations of his superiors” in Parliament, his claim that Milton “worked patiently within those limitations, adjusting to the slow, laborious processes of republican government” deserves another look in light of the motifs that can be drawn with the underworld imagery of Milton’s epic.

<sup>41</sup> Navigation Acts: October 1651: ‘An Act for Increase of Shipping, and Encouragement of the Navigation of this Nation’, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660* (1911), pp. 559–62. Online at: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=56457&strquery=Navigation>. *British History Online* (last accessed on Dec. 24, 2017).

Recent critics have challenged the traditional assumption that Secretary Milton soured on the Protectorate as the 1650s wore on.<sup>42</sup> Yet the epic portrays Hell's various counsels in contexts that recall his former work environs unfavorably, and in ways that suggest how the political strategizing, naval and military conflict, colonial exploitation, and mercantile expansion left a less than favorable impression on the poet's mind. Indeed, the precedence of "Counsel," "Council," and "Council" in the context of defiant rebellion stands as a key discursive feature of Books 1 and 2, preceding both Satan's catabatic sojourn to Eden and his charges' active exploration and settlement of Hell and its environs.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, as committee deliberations, councils sanction, shape, and conclude Satan's catabatic travels to and from Eden, providing a field of contexts for understanding their mercantile dimensions.

The journey itself, traditionally a clarifying venture into the Tartarean underworld to achieve a vision of one's worldly destiny, beomes a venture upward to sow confusion and discord within the realms of the living, and to create the conditions for warfare, disruption, and landscape despoliation. In this way Milton modifies the motif of catabasis, both inverting the otherworld journey and positioning it as the end result of routine (if contentious) parliamentary deliberation. Milton's references to "Council" and "Counsel" in its various forms pervade the underworld environs of Books 1 and 2, always in senses close to navigational, legal, and military motifs. For example, in Book 1 Milton alludes to "counsels different" (1. 636) and "Full Counsel," which "must mature" (1.660) their collective thinking as Satan's minions deliberate their course of action. The narrative culmination of Book 1 is

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<sup>42</sup> Fallon, *Milton in Government* (see note 40), questions this long-held assumption first expressed by biographer William Riley Parker, *Milton: A Biography*. 2 vols. Vol. 1: *The Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 415.

<sup>43</sup> Quint, *Inside Paradise Lost* (see note 34), here 15 and 22, finds a thematic resonance between these first two books of *Paradise Lost* and the deliberative scenes in Homer's *Iliad*: "The order of *Iliad* 2 – bee simile, assembly in council, muster, catalog – is repeated backward in *Paradise Lost* 1: catalog, muster, assembly in council, bee simile. Breaking their martial ranks, the fallen angels settle in to discuss their situation." In this light, Milton here recasts the character of deliberative proceedings, transforming a heroic motif into one where discussion trumps action. Further, Quint subsequently describes Milton's habit of inversion in subsequent scenes, observing that Satan finds his "great consulting peers, / Raised from their dark divan" (10.456–57) to congratulate him on his return. Satan comes back as an "emperor" (10.429) to his waiting "legions" (427), and anticipates a Roman-style triumph that would imitate the triumph of the Son after his victory in the War in Heaven. Instead, he and his fellow devils are transformed into serpents." Additionally, "[t]he poem already puts in place the scenario of the Exodus that Satan will subsequently parody in book 2, casting him as a diabolic Moses who promises his companions 'Deliverance' (2.465) from their Egyptian-like bondage in hell and who crosses the wilderness of Chaos to the Promised Land of God's newly created earth and Eden."

the “solemn Council forthwith to be held” (1.755), where individual rebels make their opinions known “in Counsel or in Fight” (2.20) as Book 2 begins.

The narrative of Parliamentary debate stands out as one of the most prominent features of the Miltonic underworld, its dominant idiom central to Satan’s catabatic journey upward. Proceeding after the fashion of Parliamentary strategizing an approaching war, their strategizing stands out within the “Stygian Counsel” (2.507). Within this debate, counsel abounds. For starters, Belial seeks to “perplex and dash / Maturest counsels” (2.114–15), offering his “counsels” (2.125) against “dire revenge” (2.128) and arguing against those who “counsel Warr” (2.160) when he “[c]ounsell’d” for “ignoble ease” (2.227). Moreover, he offers “peaceful Counsels” (2.279) as the means by which Satan’s charges might best “[c]ompose” their “present evils” (2.280–81). And in the wake of Belial’s council-saturated address, Beelzebub then “[p]lead[ed] his devilish Counsel” against “[h]atching vain empires” (2.378) in Hell, advocating instead to “confound the race / Of mankind in one root, and earth with hell / To mingle and involve” (2.382–384). By consistently invoking the act of Counsel within these underworld deliberations, Milton shows the resonance of Parliamentary deliberations within these Stygian debates and recalls the combative climate in which the Navigation Acts were conceived. And so, even as the council soon dissolves and the fallen angels go to hatch their plans to colonize the world in later Books, the term still pervades their idioms. Throughout Books 5 and 6, Milton likewise establishes counsel as the dominant discursive form, showing his underworld as a space associated with strategizing, debating, and holding impromptu committee meetings.<sup>44</sup> And having corrupted God’s Edenic creation in Book 9, Satan rejoins his “Legions” (10.427) in Book 10 as the “grand / In Council” (10. 427–28) sit, observing his return.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> This feature also is shown particularly as Raphael recounts to Adam the War in Heaven in Books 5 and 6: Rejecting the “new Laws” (5.679, 680) of the Son’s ascendancy in Heaven, Satan incites rebellion by invoking “new minds” (5.680) and “new Counsels, to debate” (5.681) its terms. Later, he offers “counterfeited truth” (5.771) in a “hurried meeting” (5.778) of assembled “Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers” (5.772), who gather to “consult” (5.779) about their continuing rebellion, seeking “better counsels” (5.785) suited to those “ordained to govern, not to serve” (5.802). More importantly, Satan “calls a Council” and “invents devilish Engines” (Argument) as Book 6 begins, exhorting his “Potentates” in “Council call’d by night” (6.416) to “Abandon fear” and conjoin “strength and Counsel” (6.494) as they make these weapons of celestial warfare, flying “Forthwith from Council to the work” (6.507) of preparing for this preordained, if most apocalyptic, of all battles.

<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, it is also significant then that in Book 10, with Adam’s and Eve’s tempting and subsequent fall, Milton once invokes the terms in their early moments of postlapsarian discord. Through Satan’s agency the reach of council and the spread of its deliberative impulse has been



## Assessing The Character of Early Modern *Catabasis*: Summary and Conclusions

In reading the under/otherworld imagery of the epics of Spenser and Milton, this essay has sought to explore how these two early modern poems adhere to and transform the traditions of epic. Before the early modern period, *catabasis* was a term applied as episodic underworld sojourn, one serving deliberate purposes within the larger conventions of epic. Into the age of Dante, the motif had traditionally been understood within that context – a space within a larger narrative framework where transgressive voices are heard, where the afterlife is envisioned, where heroic destinies are shaped and realized, and where gestures to the traditional conventions of the epic genre are demonstrated. This essay has sought to establish that within the Early Modern works of Spenser and Milton, the motif of *catabasis* becomes less recognizable as a journey through a largely contained underworld interlude within a larger narrative, and assumes forms more appropriate to an expansive otherworld, one no longer confined within a subterranean locus. This imagined otherworld is more detailed, more grounded, and more “mapped” – providing an inverted mirror on a world defined by healthy, morally grounded economic, political, psychological, and social behaviors.

Within the transformed catabatic worlds of Milton and Spenser, we see spaces no longer exclusively subterranean, but necessarily “other”: pervasive with self-interested strategizing if not beguiling duplicity, where unhealthy politics

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extended to earth, fundamentally exchanging the character of human experience in this now-fallen world. In speculating about that perpetually prelapsarian world that Milton offers glimpses of up to the moment of their fall, Diane Kelsey McColley, *A Gust for Paradise: Milton's Eden and the Visual Arts* (Urbana, IL, and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 189–90, observes that “[h]ad they not fallen, Adam and Eve and their offspring would presumably not want to make anything ugly, noisy, noisome, noxious, or hurtful to any creature. We cannot return to Eden, but we can make Edenic choices.” Having yielded to temptation, a penitent Eve seeks the equally troubled Adam’s “counsel in this uttermost distress” (X, 920) as he offers “counsel whom she had displeas’d,” (10. 944). At this critical moment in the newly fallen world they now inhabit, Adam and Eve make their first “Edenic choice” in electing to rise above debased discursive practice of counsel, newly introduced into worldly discourse, which Adam rejects as a first redemptive act as the pair come to terms with their defiance of God’s mandate and their impending expulsion from Eden. In these uses of the term, Milton underscores his notion of it as a postlapsarian conceit, one connoting the ideas of strategic plotting and legalistic, if not legislative, wrangling that precedes violent encounters and major disruptions. And so foregoing Eve’s idea to meet “Destruction with destruction to destroy” (10. 1006), Adam is “with such counsel nothing sway’d” (10. 1010). And so it is fitting that as Book 10 draws to a close, Adam rejects Eve’s plan – her counsel – to “seek Death” by opting for those “better hopes” (10.1011) implicit in the higher thoughts and discourses, and in the better work, that will remain accessible beyond Eden’s boundaries.

and commerce prevail, and where demonstrations of merit and transgression exceed socially-established norms. These narratives place ever greater demands on the characters who qualify as heroes, forcing them to traverse morally tenuous spaces without clear guidance, reliant only on their own wits and resources for navigation and protection. Conceived late in the developmental stages of the epic genre, this version of the epic narrative reflects the culture's ideology, one grounded in the foundational beliefs of early modern economic practice.

If all epics can be said to reflect the economic conditions of the worlds they depict, the early modern underworld visions of Spenser and Milton amplify the associations of each author's world with travel, colonization, landscape, resource use, and commerce. In articulating the moral visions, ethical imperatives, and transgressive habits of the early modern age, these two epics simultaneously adhere to and break with the traditions of *catabasis* first articulated by Homer, refined by the Old Testament visionaries, refined by the New Testament accounts, reshaped by Virgil, and adapted to the traditions of the Christian *visio* narrative. While Spenser displaced the motif of *catabasis* within larger heroic journeys through a brooding, disquieting, and disorienting otherworld landscape, Milton reinvented the motif entirely, reconfiguring it not as a journey downward to realize clarity and destiny in the world, but as a journey upward to sow confusion and bring disorder to it – in other words, to make the epic otherworld less Tartarean and more lifelike. In this way, Milton simultaneously eliminated the need for later writers of epic to employ the motif, or, more plausibly, he rendered it less relevant to, if not insignificant within, the concerns of writers seeking to depict epic aspirations. With the growing notion of authorship, evident since the late medieval worlds of Dante and Chaucer, modern readers also have a fuller sense of the terrains, topographical features, and social relationships of the author's world that filter into the imagery of early modern epic.

Throughout his Faeryland otherworld, Spenser attempts to establish the moral imperatives of Elizabethan colonialism, his landscape an ethical minefield begging for settlement and civilizing influences. Meanwhile, Milton depicts an underworld more overtly tied to settlement and resource exploitation, a mirror of a ravaged landscape recently wounded by the events of the English Revolution, and defined by a more articulated colonialist agenda and economic imperatives. His underworld assumes the form of developing colonial outpost, a sort of otherworldly penal colony, in which its denizens locate additional resources to exploit and from which they plot further colonizing and profiteering ventures. The underworld visions of both of these early modern poets depict an expanded moral geography, one more fully imbricated within the epic structure and serving a larger role within essential narrative elements and transitions. More importantly, both writers established that an underworld journey was no longer essential to define

an epic narrative. In this way both transformed the epic genre itself, changing the motif of *catabasis* from purposeful, if hellish underworld sojourn, into an otherworldly mirror, one in which landscape is both commodity and resource. While Spenser relocated this journey, Milton simultaneously elevated it to earthly realms and, in so doing, diminished its stature by affording it the status of political deliberations, held in council chambers. Spenser and Milton offer writers of later iterations of epic, including John Bunyan, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, and James Joyce, the motif of a landscape more fully mapped and detailed, within which each portrays more identifiable characters traveling through as they navigate recognizable moral climates while locating their epic heroism in these everyday environs.

Aaron French

# **Voyage to India with Sir William Jones: The Asiatick Society Remakes the West. The Travel of Texts and Their Transformative Power on Culture**

In 1784, British philologist William “Oriental” Jones (1746–1794) founded the Asiatick Society of Bengal in Calcutta for the purpose of enhancing Oriental research. Information consolidated by Jones and his colleagues during this time further eroded the tottering monolith of institutional Christianity in Europe. A number of Jones’s translations and theories eventually came to destabilize the very essence of European identity by launching the concept of the Aryan along its troubling career in European history. Early considerations of the Aryan as a common linguistic ancestor brought some European intellectuals to the conclusion that Indians and Europeans shared an evolutionary history and were therefore kin. Jones reshaped Europe by connecting colonizer to colonized through the positing of a common linguistic ancestor, which forced Europeans to think of themselves as linguistically and therefore in some ways culturally related to Indians instead of solely experiencing them as Other. From the Middle Ages to the end of the eighteenth century, western thought and scholarship was confined to the Abrahamic “religions of the book,” but through the growing popularity of textual philology, a fascination with world languages, and a greater mobility, the west came into sustained contact with India and its religious traditions and Sanskrit.

Asian epistemes influenced European modernity; however, this influence might have been foregrounded more than has been attempted. Current global tensions surrounding immigration, multiculturalism, and a “refugee crisis” can be traced, in part, to this increased mobility and travel in early modern Europe. Europeans had been traveling “East” and “to the Orient” fairly regularly by the late Middle Ages, especially on mercantile business, religious pilgrimage, and military crusade.<sup>1</sup> However, during the 1700s, there was sustained contact with South Asia, resulting in the acquisition of Sanskrit, a language heretofore

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<sup>1</sup> I employ terms like “east,” “west,” “Orient,” and “Occident” throughout the paper, not because I believe they contain anything essential, but because they possess an accessibility that helps get my point across. I deliberately make east and west lowercase for similar reasons.

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unknown by Europeans. The mastering of this language, along with its culture, by British imperial scholar-travelers sundered, perhaps, the first cultural boundaries, paving the way for concepts such as “open borders,” “cultural globalization,” and “global modernity.”<sup>2</sup>

In *Transculturality and German Discourse in the Age of European Colonialism* (2017), Chunjie Zhang tracks the reception of non-European ideas by European intellectuals during the eighteenth century and the influence of such ideas on European development. She argues that the “transference of foreign cultures into European experience and identity should receive more attention in the theorization of travel writing as a genre of encounter, contest, change, and creation of practices and perspectives.”<sup>3</sup> She calls her approach “transculturality,” a concept seeking to

highlight the *polycentric* nature of the global eighteenth century while not ignoring European colonialism. Against this backdrop, eighteenth-century global relations ... should be seen through the prism of a concept that recognizes the contribution of non-European cultures in European and German discourses while not ignoring Eurocentric and condescending elements. I call this concept transculturality.<sup>4</sup>

Zhang recognizes the use of transculturality by other disciplines to “describe twentieth- and twenty-first-century human migrations and circulations of cultural products, commerce, and goods”; however, for her purposes she deems it “a historically and conceptually precise and productive notion for the eighteenth-century German discourse in the global context.”<sup>5</sup> The focus of her study

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2 After novels, travel writing became the second most popular genre in early modern Europe. According to Chunjie Zhang: “Approximately 456 travelogues were published in the sixteenth century, 1,566 in the seventeenth, and 3,520 in the eighteenth. Two-thirds of the travelogues (2,049) published in the eighteenth century were about Europe, 561 about Asia, and 505 about the Americas.” Chunjie Zhang, *Transculturality and German Discourse in the Age of European Colonialism* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017), 185, n. 1. See also Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, “Faszination und Wissensdurst: Zu den Grenzen und Möglichkeiten interkulturellen (Miss-) Verstehens in den Werken Georg Forsters und seiner Zeitgenossen,” *Georg-Forster-Studien* 12 (2007): 77–97; here 78.

3 Zhang, *Transculturality* (see note 2), 28. See also *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Alfred Bendixen and Judith Hamera (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

4 Zhang, *Transculturality* (see note 2), 8. For parallel or related claims made by various scholars, see Madeleine Herren, Martin Rüesch, and Christiane Sibille, *Transcultural History: Theories, Methods, Sources*. Transcultural Research – Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context, 4 (Heidelberg, Berlin, and New York: Springer, 2012); “Understanding Transculturalism – Monica Juneja and Christian Kravagna in Conversation,” *Transcultural Modernisms*, ed. Model House Research Group, Publication Series of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, 12 (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013); Esther Berg, “Religious Studies and Transcultural Studies: Revealing a Cosmos Not Known Before?,” *Transcultural Studies* 2 (2016): 180–203.

5 Zhang, *Transculturality* (see note 2), 10.

is twofold: (1) to repurpose the concept of transculturality and apply it to early modern German discourse about the east and emphasize Germany's historically contingent context (which differs from, specifically, British and French colonial contexts); and (2) to deploy transculturality in order to restore further agency and visibility to non-European cultures, their contributions to, and influence on, European knowledge, self-image, and historical development.

The case study of this paper – Sir William “Oriental” Jones – belongs to a British eighteenth-century context, thus it falls under Zhang's second focus on transculturality that I will look at for my argument – namely, restoring and emphasizing the visibility and agency of non-European cultural influences by “reading from the other side.”<sup>6</sup> Following Zhang's lead, the approach of this paper is not aimed at minimizing or underrepresenting the negative impact of colonization and Eurocentrism; rather, the goal is to extend the ongoing conversation, inaugurated by Said and the subfield of post-colonial theory, in what I believe are constructive and instructive directions. The secondary goal is reparative, hoping to mend epistemic damages inflicted by colonialism by building a bridge upon which east and west cultures might come together and unite.

In 1978, Said's *Orientalism* effectively challenged the academic landscape of west-east relations during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries by highlighting the role of European imperial interest in eastern cultures – particularly in the literature, scholarship, and political agendas surrounding such interests.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the book's most important critique is the attention it draws to the violence done to non-European epistemic knowledge systems, replacing the “passivity” of such systems with an “active” western knowing: philosophical, economical, and scientific. More recently, many scholars have criticized Said's argument by pointing to the inherent ideological agenda embedded in his claims.<sup>8</sup> These criticisms have highlighted the failure of Orientalism as a theoretical model to encompass fully the historical situation accurately and fairly.

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<sup>6</sup> Zhang, *Transculturality* (see note 2), 7.

<sup>7</sup> See *Orientalism: A Reader*, ed. Alexander Lyon Macfie (New York: New York University Press, 2000), for a history of the development of Orientalism and Postcolonial Studies. See also Ronald B. Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> See *Debating Orientalism*, ed. Ziad Elmarsafy, Anna Bernard, and David Attwell (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Daniel M. Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid*. With a New Preface by the Author (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2017); Sheldon Pollock, “Deep Orientalism?: Notes on Sanskrit and Power Beyond the Raj,” *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania

Perhaps useful when applied to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, transplanting Said's conceptual model onto medieval and early modern west-east contexts does not, as some scholars have shown, do justice to the complexity or lived experiences of these encounters and ignores the different historical situations of the early modern world.<sup>9</sup> Zhang argues that Orientalism itself is a concept which, rather than rupturing the legacy of Eurocentrism, continues it:

the critique of Orientalist representations ... inadvertently grants agency almost exclusively to the European colonizers who actively represented the colonized, whereas non-Europeans are mourned merely as the passive and exploited colonized. In other words, the Europeans and the Germans are recognized as the sole speaking and acting subjects, while the agency of non-European knowledge ... remains little recognized.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the goal of this paper is to emphasize and trace the innovative career of Sir William "Oriental" Jones – who helped shape the fabric of contemporary western civilization – while at the same time resisting the "exemplar" approach to history. The objective is, rather, to show that Said's view of Jones misses the point (which has been made by more recent scholars), that east-west relations *were not* as one-sided as Said depicted them. In fact, eastern ideas were much more influential than previously imagined.<sup>11</sup> In many ways, work like Jones's inadvertently promoted subaltern interests by facilitating sustained intellectual exposure to the far older traditions of India, Egypt, and China, further undermining Christianity and the study of the Abrahamic religions.

Following the appearance of *Orientalism*, post-colonial critiques of Sir William Jones proliferated. Said viewed Jones as Orientalist *par excellence*, a key

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Press, 1993); Dorothy M. Figueira, *The Exotic: A Decadent Quest* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> See Allison Coudert, "Orientalism in Early Modern Europe?," *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 14 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 715–55; cf. also Albrecht Classen's introduction to the same volume, "Encounters Between East and West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Many Untold Stories About Connections and Contacts, Understanding and Misunderstanding," 1–122; here 12–16; Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2013); see also Kinoshita's review of *Contextualizing the Muslim Other in Medieval Christian Discourse*, ed. Jerold C. Frakes. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave 2011), in *The Medieval Review* (online, <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/17623/23741>; 12-8-11; last accessed on Feb. 9, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Zhang, *Transculturality* (see note 2), 7.

<sup>11</sup> This is also what Zhang means by "reading from the other side." Zhang, *Transculturality* (see note 2), 7–10. For a related argument on the impact of the Haitian revolution on Hegel's thought, see Susan Buck-Morss, "Hegel and Haiti," *Critical Inquiry* 26.4 (2000): 821–65.

figure assisting in furthering the imperialist agenda of western domination via his comparative analyses, privileging western culture and inflicting epistemic violence on eastern knowledge practices. The academic subfield of Post-Colonial Studies that emerged has drawn out formerly suppressed experiences and histories of subaltern communities, producing, understandably, mostly troubling conclusions about how the kind of work done by Jones and other western scholars contributed to their domination, suppression, and marginalization. Said groups Jones together with other “pioneers in the field,” such as Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805) and Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838). According to Said, these men claim a type of “priority,” “pre-eminence,” meaning their legacy of students and readers shaped Orientalist literature and influenced the view of east-west relations even after their deaths<sup>12</sup>:

It is true that after William Jones and Anquetil-Duperron, and after Napoleon’s Egyptian expedition, Europe came to know the Orient more scientifically, to live in it with greater authority and discipline than ever before. But what mattered to Europe was the expanded scope and the much greater refinement given its techniques for receiving the Orient. When around the turn of the eighteenth century the Orient definitively revealed the age of its languages – thus outdating Hebrew’s divine pedigree – it was a group of Europeans who made the discovery, passed it on to other scholars, and preserved the discovery in the new science of Indo-European philology. A new powerful science for viewing the linguistic Orient was born, and with it, as Foucault has shown in *The Order of Things*, a whole web of related scientific interests.<sup>13</sup>

Said argues that an academic discipline of Orientalism was nonexistent before the late eighteenth century, when Asia was “academically conquered” by the scholarship of Jones, Anquetil-Duperron, Silvestre de Sacy, and others. Up until that period, studies of the Orient were primarily carried out by biblical scholars, but after the mid-eighteenth century an “ism” can be added to the word Orient to describe a specific academic discipline. This marks the establishment of the *science* of Orientalism. In Said’s view, the work of these scholars revealed “the extraordinary riches of Avestan and Sanskrit” to European consciousness.<sup>14</sup> At the time, Europe was experiencing an internal intellectual destabilization during the so-called Age of Reason, which was undermining pre-established Christian norms that had been taken as truths for centuries. It is thanks to Jones and his contemporaries that the term “the Orient” began to encompass more than just Arabs, Islam, the Turks, and the Middle East – as had been the case with earlier scholars of the Orient such as Barthélemy d’Herbelot de Molainville

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<sup>12</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978; New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 8, 18.

<sup>13</sup> Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 22.

<sup>14</sup> Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 50–51.



(1625–1695) in his massive *Bibliothèque orientale* (ca. 1697). It now included India and Asia as well.<sup>15</sup>

Anquetil-Duperron's trip to India in 1754 marked the first time a European journeyed beyond the Middle East for the sole purpose of finding and translating foreign ancient texts.<sup>16</sup> His major translation of a Persian version of the Indian text *The Upanishads* in 1801–1802 marked the end of an era, as ancient and enigmatic India began to yield its secrets to Europeans. To Anquetil-Duperron's work can be added Charles Wilkins's English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* in 1785 and William Jones's *Institutes of Hindu Law* (1796 [published posthumously]), which astonished Europe and inaugurated the academic field of Indology. Silvestre de Sacy, whom Said refers to as the “first modern institutional European Orientalist,” worked on Arabic and Persian literature with special attention to the Druze religion, possibly owing to the fact that Sacy was a French freemason and freemasonry's eclectic system of doctrines shares with the Druze a secret practice of initiations and a focus on King Solomon's Temple.<sup>17</sup> Said considered Sacy to be a founding father of modern Orientalism, that “Sacy's name is associated with the beginning of modern Orientalism” because he systematized a corpus of Oriental texts and set up an effective methodological practice, organizing the information in such a way that a science of Orientalism could be perpetuated by future Orientalist scholars.<sup>18</sup>

However, Sacy could not have arranged an Orientalist discourse like this without the support and influence of contemporaries like Jones and Anquetil-Duperron.<sup>19</sup> The culmination of these events is, according to Said, the nineteenth-century careers of Orientalists such as Ernest Renan (1823–1892), whose work was more explicitly racist but who logically continued the lines of inquiry set up by his predecessors, connecting “the Orient with the most recent comparative disciplines, of which philology was

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15 Said attributes this, among other factors, to the fact that India never posed an “indigenous” threat to Europe (as the Arabs did) until after “native authority crumbled there and opened the land to inter-European rivalry and to outright European political control,” the inception of which Said locates in the actions of Napoleon to intercept Britain's “Islamic thoroughway” by invading Ottoman Egypt and Ottoman Syria (Said, *Orientalism* [see note 12], 75–76).

16 Urs App, *The Birth of Orientalism*. Encounters with Asia (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 7.

17 Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 18; for Silvestre de Sacy the freemason, see Thierry Zarcone, “The ‘Secret Life’ of Sylvestre de Sacy,” *The Symbolic Tradition of Freemasonry*, ed. Pierre Mollier. Ritual, Secrecy, and Civil Society, 2.2 (Washington, DC: Westphalia Press, an Imprint of Policy Studies Organization, 2014).

18 Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 124.

19 Raymond Schwab, *Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 64–67.

one of the most eminent.”<sup>20</sup> It was the study and grouping together of languages that provided the bedrock for Said’s definition of Orientalism, and Jones’s work in the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, as we shall see, did precisely that – bringing together various ethnic groups through a study of language and initiating the process of connecting these groups together more tightly – beyond their cultural and religious differences – while at the same time propping up necessary support for the racial discrimination and violence that broke out during the great wars in the twentieth century.

The first major steps in the Orientalism campaign were taken by Britain and France, but those who came after made important contributions. The study by the German scholar Franz Bopp (1791–1867), *Vergleichende Grammatik* (1832), played a major role in the secular process of discrediting the Edenic roots of the human language. Bopp was one of Sacy’s students. He is considered the founder of German comparative linguistics, and his work owes much to the early Orientalists. His determination to build a more coherent system of linguistic analysis can be thought of as a direct continuation of Sacy’s work. The study of the human language and its origins had become a scientific discipline, wrested from the control of the various churches, their priests and theologians, despite the ironic fact that Anquetil-Duperron, Sacy, and even Jones were ultimately motivated by a desire to corroborate the historicity of biblical events and Christian doctrine.<sup>21</sup> Said acknowledges this in *Orientalism*, but it should be re-emphasized that these developments unsettled Europe’s sense of identity to the core, the belief in Christianity as the only true religion of the world. Bopp, Renan, and many nineteenth-century philologists worked out of this framework, historicizing language scientifically rather than attributing to it a divine origin in the Garden of Eden. The “paradisiacal language” was dead, at least for a large part of Europe.

Yet Jones holds a special position in Said’s argument. It was Jones who, following the work of Anquetil-Duperron, began “codifying, tabulating, comparing” the new material texts of the Orient being revealed to Europe.<sup>22</sup> It is precisely this “comparing” that eventually led Jones to his theory of the Indo-European language family through a process of comparative grammar. Said sees in Jones’s personal

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**20** Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 130. Said makes a distinction between the privileged life of the imperial scholar who actually resided in the Orient, like Jones and Anquetil-Duperron, and the later textual philologists such as Renan who worked solely in the “bookish tradition” and lacked an element of “personal experience and personal testimony” (Said, *Orientalism* [see note 12], 157).

**21** Anquetil-Duperron traveled to Asia to try to validate biblical genealogies, Sacy was from a family of Parisian Jansenists and a devout Christian who regarded Muhammad as an impostor, and Jones’s language theories were motivated by his Anglican piety and strong belief in Mosaic monogenesis.

**22** Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 77.

study of the Orient – a study that extended to India once he was stationed there – a process of knowledge collecting intended to “gather in, to rope off, to domesticate the Orient and thereby turn it into a province of European learning.”<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Jones wrote back to Britain that he would “know India better than any European ever knew it.”<sup>24</sup> Said argues that it was Jones’s goal by way of his scholarship to learn about the Indians to best rule them, then to make comparisons between Occident and Orient to best reveal the superiority of the former. Part of Jones’s exhaustive cataloguing and codifying of Indian laws, customs, beliefs, and texts was, therefore, motivated toward this end, which persuaded A. J. Arberry in 1960 to proclaim Jones the undisputed founder of Orientalism, a claim Said echoes in *Orientalism*.<sup>25</sup>

In 1950, ten years prior to Arberry, Raymond Schwab had explained that British imperial scholars working in India, due to unrest and criticism from back home over events taking place in the eastern colonies, “were obliged to struggle against conspiracies of narrow-mindedness. The conquerors felt obligated to defend their conquest, which meant exalting their own race and religion. This resulted in spiritual and political unrest, which spread like an epidemic ... reinforcing the English prejudice of Western superiority and minimizing, for the parent state, the phenomenon of the Oriental Renaissance.”<sup>26</sup> Still, in his 1976 Foreword to Schwab’s seminal work, Said felt compelled to state that the underlying theme of *Oriental Renaissance* is “the European experience of the Orient, which is in turn based on the human need for absorbing the ‘foreign’ and ‘different.’”<sup>27</sup> He later asserted that it was the inheritors (the students and readers) of Anquetil-Duperron, Jones, Sacy, and Bobb – men such as Renan – who established the modern legacy of Orientalism, not the foundational scholars themselves:

My thesis is that the essential aspects of modern Orientalist theory and praxis (from which present-day Orientalism derives) can be understood, not as a sudden access of objective knowledge about the Orient, but as a set of structures inherited from the past, secularized, redisposed, and re-formed by such disciplines as philology, which in turn were naturalized, modernized, and laicized substitutes for (or versions of) Christian supernaturalism. In the form of new texts and ideas, the East was accommodated to these structures. Linguists and explorers like Jones and Anquetil were contributors to modern Orientalism, certainly, but what distinguishes modern Orientalism as a field, a group of ideas, a discourse, is the work of a later generation than theirs.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 78.

<sup>24</sup> Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 78.

<sup>25</sup> See A. J. Arberry, *Oriental Essays: Portraits of Seven Scholars* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1960).

<sup>26</sup> Schwab, *Oriental Renaissance* (see note 19), 43.

<sup>27</sup> Said’s Introduction in Schwab, *Oriental Renaissance* (see note 19), viii.

<sup>28</sup> Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 122.

As I argue in this paper, Said is not wrong in his argumentation but only one-sided, in that the same historical events and texts he is critiquing forced Europeans to confront the problems and inconsistencies in Christian doctrine and in the Bible, setting the stage for a globalizing modern world and a more mixed citizenry of states and nations, as we find today.

Recent scholarship has pushed back on Said's critique to explore the positive, or at least transformative, impact of the western reception of eastern culture, emphasizing that through Jones and others, eastern ideas and philosophy entered the west and became hugely influential.<sup>29</sup> Some of this work has been aimed at identifying those historical actors from the west who, in the words of one scholar, "renounced the privileges of imperialism and elected affinity with victims of their own expansionist cultures."<sup>30</sup> This was not the case with Jones, who embodied the privileges of imperialism. Yet because of his expertise and knowledge of Indian culture, he was able to transmit the complexity and intellectual advancement of India to those inclined to denigrate non-western cultures as primitive and uncivilized.

This paper thus aims to reinterpret the career of Sir William Jones by arguing in favor of the transformative effects of cultural transference. Said himself articulated a concept of "contrapuntal perspective" in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993),<sup>31</sup> which he described as revealing "overlapping territories" and "intertwined histories" of cultural encounter, as opposed to the colonial binarism imposed by the imperialist agenda.<sup>32</sup> In fact, Said initiates Zhang's concept of "reading from the

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**29** For recent scholarship showing how the east influenced the west see Jonathan Schner, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007); Saree Makdisi, *Making England Western: Occidentalism, Race, and Imperial Culture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014); Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844–1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992); Leigh E. Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012); Jeremy R. Carrette, and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2005); Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

**30** Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*. Politics, History, and Culture (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 1.

**31** Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), chs. 1 and 2.

**32** Said, *Culture* (see note 31), ch. 1.

other side,” i.e., returning agency to colonized peoples, by attempting to depict them as they exist without being confined to a white, western gaze (in Said’s argument, even the so-called anti-imperialist literature of the time does this, e.g., the work of Joseph Conrad).<sup>33</sup>

Said admits there were “artists and intellectuals who have, in effect, crossed to the other side,”<sup>34</sup> yet emphasizes that western consciousness was always “represented as the principal authority, an active point of energy that made sense not just of colonizing activities but of exotic geographies and peoples.”<sup>35</sup> Said concludes that “only the [contrapuntal] perspective is fully sensitive to the reality of historical experience. Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogenous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic.”<sup>36</sup> In this quote, a greater depth of Said’s claims is revealed, especially since he is often thought to be resolved and not nuanced about the way westerners denigrated and feminized non-western cultures. When drawing out these “intertwined histories,” the results inevitably reveal states of hybridity, ambiguity, and transculturality, precisely the condition of our modern world. The life of William Jones can tell us much about how we got here.

My goal is to re-describe Jones in light of new conceptual developments in the fields of post-colonial and cultural theory, and to problematize and complicate an orthodox Orientalist reading of Jones’s life. For example, Leela Gandhi’s *Affective Communities* (2006) draws out the influence of western “nonplayers,” who, in their inter-cultural interactions, developed a “politics of friendship” and “minor” formations of anti-imperialism, which “productively complicates our perspective on colonial encounter.”<sup>37</sup> Of course, Jones was not, by any means, one of Gandhi’s “nonplayers.” However, work done by David Cannadine, Saree Makdisi, and Jonathan Schneer has served to enhance our perspective on colonial encounter and show that “imperial messages were frequently intercepted, refused, and diluted from within the metropolis well before they reached the colonial periphery.”<sup>38</sup> Based on his intellectual and aesthetic sensitivities and affinities for colonized Indians and their culture, it becomes possible to view

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<sup>33</sup> Said, *Culture* (see note 31), xix.

<sup>34</sup> Said offers Jean Genet, Basil Davidson, Alben Memmi, Juan Goytisolo, and others as examples.

<sup>35</sup> Said, *Culture* (see note 31), xx–xxi.

<sup>36</sup> Said, *Culture* (see note 31), xxv.

<sup>37</sup> Gandhi, *Affective Communities* (see note 30), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Gandhi, *Affective Communities* (see note 30), 1. See Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Saree Makdisi, *Making*

Jones as acting as such a diluting and intercepting force on the colonial front. Although Jones was deployed as Judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta, a position he accepted partly for financial reasons, he had already cultivated enough interest in the Orient, its cultures, and philosophies to learn Persian, Arabic, and Hebrew. He had been collecting materials to write a history of Asia and in 1770 he published *Histoire de Nader Chah* and in 1771 *Grammar of the Persian Language*, which “drew attention of the European literati to their insular outlook.”<sup>39</sup> In the Preface to this work, twelve years before he sailed to India, Jones articulated a sincere interest in non-European culture:

Some men never heard of the Asiatic writings, and others will not be convinced that there is any thing valuable in them; some pretend to be busy, and others are really idle .... we all love to excuse, or conceal our ignorance, and are seldom willing to allow any excellence beyond the limits of our own attainments ...<sup>40</sup>

Then, published in 1772, his “Essay on the Poetry of Eastern Nations” formulated the same notion:

If the languages of the Eastern nations were studied in our great seminaries of learning ... a new and ample field would be opened for speculation; we should have a more extensive insight into the history of the human mind; we should be furnished with a new set of images and similitudes; and a number of excellent compositions would be brought to light, which future scholars might explain, and future poets might imitate.<sup>41</sup>

Jones’s ideas about and later experiences among the people he was charged to colonize exhibited these qualities described by Gandhi – i.e., the aspects of a soft form of politics of friendship and the dilution of the imperialist agenda by portraying Indian society as increasingly advanced and complex. This challenges Gandhi’s idea that only “nonplayers” could minimize the privileges of the imperialist position, undermine its agenda, and elect “affinity with victims of their own expansionist cultures.”<sup>42</sup> Apparently, players such as Jones could, and did, do this as well.

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*England Western: Occidentalism, Race, and Imperial Culture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

<sup>39</sup> O. P. Kejariwal, “William Jones: The Copernicus of History,” *Objects of Enquiry: The Life, Contributions, and Influences of Sir William Jones, 1746–1794*, ed. Garland Cannon and Kevin R. Brine (New York: New York University Press, 1995).

<sup>40</sup> *The Works of Sir William Jones*, ed. Anna Maria Jones, 13 vols. (London: Stockdale, 1807), vol. 5, 166. Quoted in Kejariwal, “William Jones” (see note 39), 106.

<sup>41</sup> Jones, *Works*, vol. 10, 359–60. Quoted in Kejariwal, “William Jones” (see note 39), 106.

<sup>42</sup> Gandhi, *Affective Communities* (see note 30), 1.

In a more overtly political vein, Vivek Chibber argues that post-colonial theory, by migrating from literary criticism into other fields, has become an ideological political project, which is now used “not just to study colonial history but also to enable political practice.”<sup>43</sup> If this is true, certain aspects of post-colonial theory may have become, to some degree, poisonous or counter-productive by making it impossible for people to see more than one side of an issue. Furthermore, critiques of cultural privilege assigned, quite rightly, to specific bodies of cultural comparativism, particularity in the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, may not actually encompass the full scope of that history. A more constructive (perhaps creative) viewpoint might be obtained by moving beyond bivalent dialectics to the concept of resonance and hybridization.

In 1966, Lévi-Strauss articulated the concept of “bricolage” in *The Savage Mind*, which he described as to “take to pieces and reconstruct sets of events ... and use them as so many indestructible pieces for structural patterns in which they serve alternatively as ends or means.”<sup>44</sup> Through this process, so-called primitive societies which employed a magical mode of thinking were nonetheless able to construct coherent worldviews based on connections between related and unrelated events – in other words, based on an aesthetic sense of *resonance*. Turning from the bivalent dialectic to hybridization and resonance is to further elaborate the bricolage of Lévi-Strauss, abandoning a hermeneutics of suspicion to adopt what Rita Felski suggests to be a form of “post-critical reading,” as well as to approach what David Wellbery first called a “post-hermeneutics.”<sup>45</sup> This type of approach lends itself, among other things, to an emphasis on affect over

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<sup>43</sup> Vivek Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (London: Verso, 2012), 2.

<sup>44</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*. Phoenix Books, P325. Nature of Human Society Series (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; London, England: Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd., 1966), 33.

<sup>45</sup> For post-critical reading, see Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 12; David Wellbery coined the term “post-hermeneutics” in 1990 in his Foreword to Friedrich A. Kittler’s *Discourse Networks*, in which Wellbery states that “criticism informed by post-structuralism is, in fact, a post-hermeneutic criticism. It abandons the language game and form of life defined by the hermeneutic canons of justification and enters into domains of inquiry inaccessible to acts of appropriative understanding.” See David Wellbery, “Foreword,” Friedrich A. Kittler, *Discourse Networks, 1800–1900*, trans. Michael Metteer and Chris Cullens (1985; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), ix. The main question posed by this line of thinking is, how might a non-hermeneutic criticism be developed, and what would it look like? For the purposes of this paper, post-hermeneutics can be said to represent a new method of interpretation that moves away from Paul Ricoeur’s description of a “hermeneutics of suspicion” (1970), that method of interpretation so well-entrenched in the social sciences. I am thinking post-hermeneutics as a form of “new” hermeneutics along the lines of Donovan Schaefer, who looks to a post-J. Z. Smith “world as a text” perspective – essentially, which looks

intellectuality, as the former presupposes a privileged index of interpretation, precisely that of Said, which remains interested in uncovering the underlying ideological causes of a text or event.<sup>46</sup> By introducing resonance, I have in mind cultural encounter, internalization, and re-interpretation of that same cultural encounter in a novel way, with as much focus on affect as on intellectuality.<sup>47</sup> This is a useful lens through which to re-examine certain historical actors, such as Jones, who remain enmeshed within the cultural osmosis of imperial encounter. As we shall see, Jones dressed in Indian attire, attended Indian musical performances, and responded emotionally to Indian poetry – examples highlighting the affect over intellectuality approach of this paper.

In 1783, Jones abandoned Britain for India at the age of 37 aboard the *Crocodile*, with his new wife Anna Maria Shipley in tow. At the time, he had already mastered Arabic, Hebrew, and Persian but was yet to learn Sanskrit. A month before his departure, he had been appointed to the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal, where Warren Hastings (1732–1818) was the governor-general. Jones had also been knighted by King George III, notwithstanding his political pamphlet “The Principles of Government” (1782), composed at his friend Benjamin Franklin’s house, which was the subject of much controversy. The pamphlet described a peasant who believed the king should be impeached if he failed to secure political liberties and advocated the right to bear arms in the fight against absolute monarchy. For supporting the American Revolution and constitutional government, Jones had been labeled “Republican Jones,” the first of many epithets.

How did Jones view this as consistent with his being knighted and accepting a position in India to expand the Empire? Jones’s most recent biographer, Michael

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to “affect.” See Donovan O. Schaefer, *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

<sup>46</sup> See *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); and Donovan O. Schaefer, *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015). These texts deploy affect as an approach to challenge well-worn bivalent theory.

<sup>47</sup> In an interesting recent book, anthropologist Susan Lepselter develops the concept of resonance in relation to affect: “I use the term ‘resonance’ in this book to mean the intensification produced by the overlapping, back and forth call of signs from various discourses [in this case, the discourses of west/east and India/Britain through Sir William Jones as medium].... Resonance describes the social, affective, and aesthetic dimension of a perspective based in apopheonia, finding connections between signs ... Here those connections are based on resemblance and repetition. This effect entails mimesis, but the resemblance is partial and fluid. It is *felt*.” Susan Lepselter, *The Resonance of Unseen Things: Poetics, Power, Captivity, and UFOs in the American Uncanny* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 4.



J. Franklin, explains that Jones would have seen the money he would acquire from the position as an opportunity to secure financial independence, enabling him to live the life of a scholar and support his new wife.<sup>48</sup> In 1770, Jones had already jeopardized his patronage from the household of the first Earl Spencer, where he had served as tutor, by quitting his tutorship and entering the Middle Temple to study law. Keven R. Brine writes that this event was “a significant turning point for [Jones] because it briefly risked his relationship with the Spencers, in an effort to break the dependence on patronage that characterized his father’s life and left his mother with few resources.”<sup>49</sup> In *Modernity and its Discontents* (1967), César Graña has described the difficulties experienced by intellectuals and artists as the patronage system was disappearing in the face of the growth of a mass market.<sup>50</sup>

Jones’s experience might be situated within this plight of the intelligentsia facing the new realities of the literary market place. Equally enticing for Jones was the prospect of acquiring a new wealth of knowledge about the Asiatic lands and transferring it to Europe. His enshrined “principles of government” regarding universal suffrage did not, it seems, fully extend to the Indian people, although one of the most important aspects of Jones’s project included cataloging Muslim and Hindu law. Franklin sums up: “the republican at home morphed into the enlightened despot abroad.”<sup>51</sup> The initial translation of the physical body of Jones to India provided the foundation for future traveling texts and the transference of Indian culture, all of which entered the mixture of ideas undermining the authority of Christianity and the belief in western culture as the most advanced.

It took over five months for Jones to reach India. He was not unfamiliar with the sea as his father had sailed to the West Indies and acquired his own epithet, “Longitude Jones.” On July 12, 1783, aboard the *Crocodile* frigate, Jones enumerated his famous “Objects of Enquiry during My Residence in India,” which Brine

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48 Garland Cannon’s published book on Jones from 1990 does little to challenge Said’s claims about Jones, whereas Michael J. Franklin’s recent book does more toward this end. Therefore, for the purposes of my argument and this paper, I derive a large part of my biographical data on Jones from the Franklin publication. See Garland H. Cannon, *The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones: Sir William Jones, the Father of Modern Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and Michael J. Franklin, *Orientalist Jones: Sir William Jones, Poet, Lawyer, and Linguist, 1746–1794* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

49 Kevin R. Brine, “Introduction,” *Objects of Enquiry* (see note 39), 7

50 See César Graña, *Modernity and its Discontents* (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper Torchbooks, 1967); for Jones’s financial motivations for traveling to India, see Rosane Rocher, “Weaving Knowledge: Sir William Jones and the Indian Pandits” *Objects of Enquiry* (see note 39), 51–79. Rocher argues that Jones’s motivation was primarily financial.

51 Franklin, *Orientalist Jones* (see note 48), 4.

calls “an important landmark in the origins of Orientalism.”<sup>52</sup> Yet the passage also illustrates that even “players” – referring to Gandhi’s argument about “non-players” – could be positively affected by a culture that was thought backward, if not primitive. Jones’s full list of objects of enquiry is as follows:

1. The Laws of the Hindus and Mohammedans.
2. The History of the Ancient World.
3. Proofs and Illustrations of Scripture.
4. Traditions concerning the Deluge, &c.
5. Modern Politics and Geography of Hindustan.
6. Best Mode of governing Bengal.
7. Arithmetic and Geometry, and mixed Sciences of the Asiatics.
8. Medicine, Chemistry, Surgery, and Anatomy of the Indians.
9. Natural Productions of India.
10. Poetry, Rhetoric, and Morality of Asia.
11. Music of the Eastern Nations.
12. The Shi-King, or 300 Chinese Odes.
13. The Best Accounts of Tibet and Cashmir.
14. Trade, Manufactures, Agriculture, and Commerce of India.
15. Mogul Constitution, contained in the Defteri Alemghiri, and Ayein Acbari.
16. Mahratta Constitution.<sup>53</sup>

In a second section, Jones adds such audacious enterprises as the publishing of law tracts in Arabic and Persian, the Psalms of David in Persian, even the Gospel of Luke in Arabic. Despite the biblical overtones, what is already present in this memorandum is the enthusiastic admixture of different cultural customs and beliefs, an intellectual practice which, this paper argues, defined Jones’s career and helped guide Europe toward a cosmopolitan, multicultural future. The biblical references support the idea that Jones’s main motivation was not as proto-Aryan, seeking to elevate eighteenth-century Europe as the most advanced. Rather, Jones sought the primeval ancient theology that existed prior to the biblical flood – a belief held by some European intellectuals of the time. As Urs App has documented, this antediluvian religion was pure, esoteric, and monotheistic, but had degraded into polytheism as humankind became more materialistic, ultimately

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<sup>52</sup> Brine, “Introduction,” *Objects of Enquiry* (see note 39), 10.

<sup>53</sup> *The Collected Works of William Jones*, ed. G. H. Cannon (Richmond, United Kingdom: Curzon Press, 1993) vol. 2, 3–4.

requiring spiritual regeneration through Christianity.<sup>54</sup> For Jones, tracking down and identifying the existence and location of the ancient monotheistic religion – what App refers to as the Ur-religion – could scientifically corroborate the Mosaic genealogy: monogenesis. Much as Voltaire believed the cradle of civilization was in India, Jones came to believe the Ur-religion had its roots in Asia.<sup>55</sup>

In September of 1783, as the *Crocodile* sailed on toward its final destination, Jones became so impressed by the beauty of the landscape that he felt intoxicated, ranking its splendor over even that of Wales and Switzerland.<sup>56</sup> In Anjouan, he exchanged gifts with the local Shaikh and even proclaimed proudly *Allahu Akbar* on departing.<sup>57</sup> As a Christian, although a scientifically oriented and open-minded one, such an exclamation of the Islamic faith might seem striking. Yet Jones's motivation to do this, aside from his being swept up in the picturesque landscape, likely related to his deep dedication to cultural exchange and belief in the ancient monotheism that connected all religions prior to the flood, the roots of which (he felt) lay in the east.<sup>58</sup> Jones's religious position was somewhat unique. As Brine explains:

Based on an examination of Jones's religious insights as expressed in prayers written in the margins of his books, and as indicated by his passionate devotion to Persian Sufi and Hindu bhakti poetry, the evidence is that he was a member of the Anglican community who had an ardently grateful piety. But he believed that God was accessible through other faiths .... Jones was religious but not evangelical ....<sup>59</sup>

Once established in Calcutta, Jones and his new wife adopted the traditional Indian dress at home and made many friends and acquaintances, including painters, judiciary, colonial nobility, and the leaders of the East India Company. Using the lens of transculturality, Zhang has articulated the significance of European colonists wearing native clothing. Writing of British sailor and explorer Captain James Cook (1728–1779), who conformed to Tahitian culture and clothing while in the South

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<sup>54</sup> Urs App, "William Jones's Ancient Theology," *Sino-Platonic Papers* 191 (2009). See [http://sino-platonic.org/complete/spp191\\_william\\_jones\\_orientalism.pdf](http://sino-platonic.org/complete/spp191_william_jones_orientalism.pdf) (last accessed on Feb. 9, 2018).

<sup>55</sup> Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (Lyon: Chez J.B. Delamollière, 1792).

<sup>56</sup> Franklin, *Oriental Jones* (see note 48), 6.

<sup>57</sup> Franklin, *Oriental Jones* (see note 48), 6.

<sup>58</sup> Early biographies attempted to paint Jones as a good "Clapham evangelical" or a kind of Christian missionary to India. Cannon argues that even a cursory reading through Jones's letters and works reveals high praise for Indian and Asiatic culture and religion, suggesting quite a different religious portrait of Jones. See Cannon, *The Life and Mind*, Introduction (see note 48): "Despite his own occasional ethnocentrism, he recognized that Europeans must discard their biased opinions about colonial people before they could appreciate India's intellectual, artistic, and spiritual achievements and recognize the Asians' place in the family of human beings" (xiii). See also *The Letters of Sir William Jones*, ed. Garland Cannon, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

<sup>59</sup> Brine, "Introduction," *Objects of Enquiry* (see note 39), 14.

Pacific, Zhang argues that through this process, “instead of being an object of imperial gaze, the South Pacific intrudes upon its European spectators and coerces them into metamorphosis.”<sup>60</sup> A similar transformation was underway in Jones, and here we can stress the importance of affect over intellectuality – i.e., adopting sensual culture – which I am associating with a post-hermeneutics mode of reading.

Jones found himself in charge of half a million “natives,” confessing in his diaries the temptation of such power while assuring himself that he could be trusted to maintain it justly. He took up with Sir Charles Wilkins, a fellow member of the Royal Society, and the first person to translate the *Bhagavad Gita* into English a year after the Asiatick Society was founded. Charles Wilkins and his associate Nathaniel Halhed were already employed by the East India Company when Jones arrived. They had studied Persian and Indian culture and had recently “hand-cast a Bengali typeface,” which they used to print the first Indian language book, *Grammar of the Bengali Language* (1778). As Robert Cowan explains, the Brahmin pandits had “snubbed the two enterprising Orientalists when they inquired into the sacred Hindu texts to which only that high caste was privy.”<sup>61</sup> This makes the eventual learning of Sanskrit by Jones all the more significant. Charles Allen argues that, while secrecy and inaccessibility surrounding these Sanskrit texts ensured the class-power of the pandits, they began to relent after Wilkins’s press made a positive impact on them.<sup>62</sup> With Wilkins’s help, Jones started working on his own project of 18 “Hymns to the Hindu Deities.”

The Asiatick Society was founded in collaboration with Warren Hastings in January of 1784 in the courthouse Grand Jury Room, presided over by Sir Robert Chambers, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court at Fort William. The Society promised to further the study of the Oriental languages, religion, and culture and included many notable and respectable members, composed of a variety of ethnicities, who published papers on everything from poetry, to religion, to music in their *Asiatick Researches*. The work of the Society immediately began to reveal that the traffic between east and west was far more complicated than initially thought. Its transmissions, particularly Jones’s eleven anniversary discourses published in the journal, succeeded in drawing Europe and Asia closer together on a cultural and spiritual level, particularly via expert linguistic and religious comparisons.

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<sup>60</sup> Zhang, *Transculturality* (see note 2), 28.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Cowan, *The Indo-German Identification: Reconciling South Asian Origins and European Destinies, 1765–1885*. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), 64.

<sup>62</sup> Charles Allen, *The Search for the Buddha: The Men Who Discovered India’s Lost Religion* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003), 48.

As news of the Society's formation reached London through some of Jones's published writings, it was met with great excitement and enthusiasm. Diffusion of the *Asiatick Researches* spread throughout England, Germany, and France with remarkable speed. Raymond Schwab, in his seminal work on the Oriental Renaissance, highlights the significance of the spread of these publications in Europe, especially in relation to English and German poetry. He claims that the early Indic scholars were "on the verge of introducing a new classicism enhanced by Sanskrit," and cites the influence of Asia on the Lakes School poets: William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Robert Southey.<sup>63</sup> Four editions of the *Asiatick Researches* sold out and secured Jones's international reputation. As Schwab documents, England prided itself on their eastern works and transmitted them to the rest of Europe. They were quickly translated into German, inaugurating an "Indic Renaissance" in Germany where Jones's writing and translations of such important Sanskrit works as *Shakuntala*, *Gita Govinda*, and others were read by Goethe, Herder, Schiller, and Novalis, as well as Schelling, Fichte, Hegel, and Schleiermacher.

In his published writings, Jones laid out his imperial agenda of knowledge, control, and dominance over the populations of the region; but he also reported on his comparative linguistic and religious connections, which increasingly indicated a common Indo-European origin and revealed the complexity and greatness of ancient Indian civilization. While Said has argued that Jones's project was to "gather in, to rope off, to domesticate the Orient and thereby turn it into a province of European learning,"<sup>64</sup> Franklin stresses the "blinding obviousness" of such an argument. How could it have been otherwise in 1784? Franklin contends that "there can be no destruction of prejudice without the understanding that springs from knowledge."<sup>65</sup> In his writings on education, Jones even emphasized the importance of assimilating the wisdom of other cultures and learning their languages to comprehend them, fully arguing that one's education was incomplete if it remained dependent on one's own culture; self-development and understanding required study of other cultures and their achievements – an argument which, as Achala Moulik points out, prefigures the Charter of UNESCO and its dedication to dialogue between civilizations.<sup>66</sup> Jones also inaugurated the study of ancient Indian history in its modern sense by being the first to establish "a mid-point in Indian history from which other events could be charted: the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (ca. 322–ca. 298 B.C.E.), the king 'Sandrokottos'

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<sup>63</sup> Schwab, *Oriental Renaissance* (see note 19), 53.

<sup>64</sup> Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 78.

<sup>65</sup> Franklin, *Oriental Jones* (see note 48), 19.

<sup>66</sup> Mohandas Moses and Achala Moulik, *Dialogue of Civilizations: William Jones and the Orientalists* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2009), vi.

of whom Megasthenes had told.”<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, Jones’s Whiggish leanings, his support of the American Revolution and connection to Benjamin Franklin, influenced his thinking more than one might imagine, given his imperial connections. This influence ultimately compelled him to support Indians being governed by their own laws, a legal system seen as comparable to that of ancient Greece. In other words, his view of the American Revolution was not so different from what he came to believe about the rights of Indians.

Jones attempted, through a study of Indian religion and culture, to portray a sophisticated and advanced subcontinent to his superiors back home. This was easy for him since the more time he and Anna spent in India, the more he fell in love with it, writing to Richard Johnson: “I am in love with the *Gopia*, charmed with *Crishen*, an enthusiastick admirer of *Ram*, and a devout adorer of *Brimha-bishen-mehais* [Brahma, Vishnu, Siva: the *trimurti*, which had come to be seen as the equivalent of the Christian trinity].”<sup>68</sup> When, at the suggestion of Warren Hastings, Jones and his wife stayed a few miles outside Banaras for a time with Francis Fowke, a French Orientalist, and his sister Margaret, Jones’s increasing interest and immersion into Indian music and drama slowly awakened in him an awareness of his feminine side through Hindu concepts such as *prakriti* and *sakti*. The Fowkes, particularly Margaret, had a passion for music and set up a residential theater where Indian and Arabic music and drama was performed by the locals. Jones and Francis wrote imitative poetry, often blending Oriental and classical elements, enshrining the natural world as well as both Margaret and Anna. Now Jones was frequently called upon by Muslim and Hindu intellectuals, with whom he played chess and engaged in invigorating discussions. Jones learned much from the then twenty-six-year-old single Margaret, who exposed him to the local arts and culture, as she performed with the Indian musicians and became “more than instrumental – indeed, charmingly vocal – in determining the course of Jones’s own research into Indian music.”<sup>69</sup> Educated British males absorbed many negative ideas about women from classical as well as Christian culture, but Jones’s interaction with and exposure to Margaret during his experience in Banaras may have offered him a different picture of femininity, influencing his positive view of having a “feminine” side.<sup>70</sup> The culmination of this came in 1792

<sup>67</sup> Cowan, *The Indo-German Identification* (see note 61), 66.

<sup>68</sup> Jones, *Letters* (see note 58), vol. 2, 652. Quoted in Franklin, *Oriental Jones* (see note 48), 22.

<sup>69</sup> Franklin, *Oriental Jones* (see note 48), 29.

<sup>70</sup> See Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de Siècle Culture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). See also id., *Evil Sisters: The Threat of Female Sexuality and the Cult of Manhood* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996); Joseph A. Kestner,

when Jones published “On the Musical Modes of the Hindus,” the first serious study of Indian music ever carried out by a westerner.<sup>71</sup>

Once having returned to Calcutta, Jones determined to learn Sanskrit sometime around 1785. There were at least two factors influencing his decision, both of which are telling. Indigenous Indian law was generally ignored in favor of British common law, a system based on recorded judicial precedents and which had been transported to India along with the British East India Company. Thus, it was not the custom of judges from England to have a good understanding of Indian law. Many of Jones’s colonialist colleagues for the most part viewed India as having a savage, worthless culture. Jones had begun responding to this problem even before leaving for Calcutta, when his writings had become the cause of controversy in England for supporting the American colonists.

Back in 1781–1782, with the assistance of his friend Edmund Burke, he had prepared Indian legislation permitting “India to be governed by its own laws and customs,” as well as instructions for handling Muslims in India based on Jones’s translation of an Arabic legal tract.<sup>72</sup> Once stationed in Calcutta, Jones resolved to see these aspirations fully realized by ultimately applying democratic principles to his judicial work and securing Indian citizens the right to a trial by jury.<sup>73</sup> Though other junior servants of the East India Company had studied and written of Indian customs and even studied Sanskrit, Jones was a Supreme Court Judge, which allowed him to put his political ideals into practice and eventually to assemble an official staff of pandits and *maulavis* (Muslim law teachers). His initial reactions to this endeavor betray his uneasy imperial position, for, as he wrote in his correspondence regarding the objective of establishing a colonial power in India, “we are entirely at the devotion of the native lawyers, through our ignorance of Shanscrit.”<sup>74</sup> In this statement, we see the tension inherent in his position; that is, his championing of the civil liberties for the American colonists did not yet extend to Indians who appeared to Jones as unfit in their current state of development for freedom. He wrote that Indians were “incapable of civil liberty; few of them have an idea of it; and those, who have, do not wish it ....

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*Mythology and Misogyny: The Social Discourse of Nineteenth-Century British Classical-Subject Painting* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

71 See Franklin, *Oriental Jones* (see note 48), 25–33.

72 Cannon Garland, “Sir William Jones, Persian, Sanskrit and the Asiatic Society,” *Histoire Épistémologie Langage* 6.2 (1984): 83–94.

73 “Jones, William,” *Encyclopedia of World Biography*. *Encyclopedia.com* ( <http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/jones-william>; last accessed on Feb. 9, 2018).

74 Jones, *Letters* (see note 58), vol. 2, 666. Quoted in Franklin, *Oriental Jones* (see note 48), 34.

they must be ruled by an absolute power.”<sup>75</sup> This, of course, was only until their ancient culture could be restored.

Jones committed to learning Sanskrit after receiving a Sanskrit book from his Muslim friend Ali Ibrahim Khan – a decision which, in Franklin’s estimation, “was to change Europe’s self-understanding.”<sup>76</sup> The book was the *Mānava-Dharmaśāstra* or “Law-Code of the school of Manu,” a famous Hindu text of jurisprudence, controversial for supporting oppression of women and members of the lower castes. It was, therefore, on the one hand, as a judge that Jones aspired to learn Sanskrit, for it seemed necessary if he was to assist the Indian people in eventually being capable of self-rule. On the other hand, Jones may have developed a further motivation for continued study of the language based on his belief in a primordial monotheistic religion rooted in ancient India. He had long ago determined the key importance of India in this equation. According to Urs App, Jones was lent a copy of the Persian *Dabistan* (a study of South Asian religions and sects probably composed in the seventeenth century) by John Shore in 1786 and read it through more than once.

Based on these readings, Jones later described in his “Sixth Discourse: on the Persians,” delivered to the Asiatick Society in 1789, that “we learn from the *Dabistan*, that ... *Mahabad* (a word apparently *Sanscrit*) ... received from the creator, and promulgated among men, *a sacred book in a heavenly language*, to which the *Muselman* author gives the *Arabic* title of *Desatir*, or Regulations ...”<sup>77</sup> App argues that “Jones thought that the ‘heavenly language’ referred to Sanskrit and that the *Desatir* corresponded to the *Institutes of Menu*.”<sup>78</sup> Thus, we can identify at least two motivations behind Jones’s inclination to learn Sanskrit, both of which presuppose the elevation of Indian culture.

Jones tracked down an old pandit named Ramalocana, who reluctantly agreed to tutor him for a hundred rupees a month. Apparently, the lessons were often delivered through a ritualistic, quasi-initiatory method. They studied a variety of texts, including Hindu philosophy and mythology. Eventually, pupil and student hit it off so well that they continued to work together in Calcutta, where Jones studied the *Mānava-Dharmaśāstra* daily and became sufficiently conversant with duties of the king, foreign policy, wartime strategies, and law and jurisprudence. Only six months after Jones had learned Sanskrit, he delivered his famous “Third

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<sup>75</sup> Jones, *Letters* (see note 58), vol. 2, 712–13. Quoted in Cannon, “Oriental Jones,” *Objects of Enquiry* (see note 39), 47.

<sup>76</sup> Franklin, *Oriental Jones* (see note 48), 34.

<sup>77</sup> From the London reprint (1796) of the third volume of the *Asiatick Researches* (418–435). Quoted in App, “William Jones’s Ancient Theology” (see note 54), 101.

<sup>78</sup> App, “William Jones’s Ancient Theology” (see note 54), 63.



Anniversary Discourse” to the Asiatick Society, which Franklin cites as containing the “world-modifying” statement outlining the Indo-European language family and positing its descent from a common, nameless ancestor. This “family” of languages was to include, in Jones’s inference, Old Persian, Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Gothic, and Celtic. This linkage inaugurated the scholarly field of comparative linguistics and transformed the philology that rose to such prominence in the nineteenth century. Jones believed that what modern-day linguists refer to as Proto-Indo-European dispersed from some central location following the biblical flood of Noah around 4000 years ago, perhaps somewhere around Iran, near where the fabled Tower of Babel was thought to be located. Jones’s approach may have been scientific, but his worldview remained entrenched in the literal truth of biblical history, in the monogenesis of “Mosaic ethnology.”

However, as Peter Harrison has argued, literalist thinking about the bible could often undermine itself – which, in hindsight, is true of Jones’s scholarly work.<sup>79</sup> To quote from his “Third Anniversary Discourse”:

the general effect of conquest is to leave the current language of the conquered people unchanged, or very little altered, in its ground-work, but to blend with it a considerable number of exotick names both for things and for actions; as it has happened in every country, that I can recollect, where the conquerors have not preserved their own tongue unmixed with that of the natives ... this analogy might induce us to believe, that ... the *Sanscrit* was introduced by conquerors from other kingdoms in some very remote age ... The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a strong affinity ... so strong indeed, that no philologer could exam all three [Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin], without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists: there is a similar reason ... for supposing that both the *Gothick* and the *Celtick*, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the *Sanscrit*; and the old Persian might be added to the same family ....<sup>80</sup>

Despite the biblical underpinnings, Jones took the study of language away from theologians and biblical scholars and placed it squarely in the realm of science and the scientific study of language – heralding what James Turner calls “a post-Christian frame of erudition.”<sup>81</sup> Turner observes that following Jones’s

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<sup>79</sup> Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>80</sup> Sir William Jones, “Third Anniversary Discourse,” *Asiatick Researches* 1 (1788), 415–31. Quoted from *The Aryan Debate*, ed. Thomas R. Trautmann. Oxford in India Readings: Debates in Indian History and Society (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3–5; here 5.

<sup>81</sup> See Hans Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), for the history of linguistics from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.

investigations into Sanskrit, “[g]rowing knowledge of languages across the world and increasingly rigorous study of them gave a new empirical basis for generalizing about the nature of language.”<sup>82</sup> The ranking of Sanskrit, the language of a dark-skinned, now-colonized people, above the classical languages of the Europeans, “offered a new view of the relationships among languages, implying a new program for studying them.”<sup>83</sup>

What Jones was able to show, notwithstanding his belief in monogenesis, was that linguistic data could be studied and compared in an interdisciplinary manner, drawing etymological conclusions based on empirical observations and verifiable facts, revealing connections among certain languages.<sup>84</sup> Cannon remarks that although Jones indeed “hoped to trace the inhabitants of the area back to a single source, his desire for commonalty did not lead him to posit linguistic affinity before weighing the evidence.”<sup>85</sup> Even Said recognized this fact when he wrote, “the difference between the history offered internally by Christianity and the history offered by philology, a relatively new discipline, is precisely what made modern philology possible ... the final rejection of the divine origins of language.”<sup>86</sup>

None of this, as Franklin invites us to consider, corresponds to Said’s critique of Jones in *Orientalism* about a tendency toward essentialism, but rather represents a truly scientific analysis based on empirical observation. Jones’s conclusions were far from being unfounded; he revealed commonalities inherent in linguistic structures, introducing the idea of the evolution of languages, even that languages could become extinct. This had profound effects on the intellectual development of the west, both positive and negative. Franklin points out that one important positive effect was that this linkage of root languages undermined certain sentiments of western cultural superiority and caused westerners to have to re-evaluate their relation to their new colonized brothers and sisters.

A second result, perhaps more negative, was the introduction of the concept of the Aryans into European collective consciousness, the ramifications of which bore strange fruit during the Second World War. An academic obsession with racialization, and a scientific preoccupation with eugenics and evolution – eventually referred to as Social Darwinism – increased in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>82</sup> James Turner, *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 120.

<sup>83</sup> Turner, *Philology* (see note 82), 97.

<sup>84</sup> Cannon, *Life and Mind* (see note 48), 242.

<sup>85</sup> Cannon, *Life and Mind* (see note 48), 242.

<sup>86</sup> Said, *Orientalism* (see note 12), 135.

Franklin goes so far as to call Jones “the Darwin of Linguistics.”<sup>87</sup> This linguistic connection launched the European fascination with India and reworked how westerners related to their ancient heritage, a development that initially took flight among the German Romantics.

To conclude, Jones’s acquisition of Sanskrit and translation of Indian texts and knowledge did more for creating the current global osmosis of multiculturalism than Said gave him credit for. Jones’s translations of Indian poetry were read by Herder and other German intellectuals and spurred the German Romantic movement, which, by building on previously established ideas of a common origin for Indian and Germanic languages and civilizations, served to unite east and west on a poetic, artistic, even ethnic level (another example of affect over intellectuality). This east/west merger, particularly regarding India and Germany, would have the dual effect of collapsing (at least conceptually) certain ethnic boundaries, paving the way for a future multicultural state; however, it would also have a tragic influence on the rise of National Socialism and nationalistic German sentiment in the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries.

Yet Jones’s academic oeuvre, more importantly his lived biography, reveals the importance of traveling texts on the transformation of culture. Indeed, the “Aryan Debate” continues among academics today. Sanskrit originally arrived in India from the direction of Iran – a word literally meaning “land of the Aryans” – and was spoken by people calling themselves “Arya.”<sup>88</sup> The word Aryan, itself a part of Indian history or eastern history, has since the Second World War become irrevocably entwined with the racial politics of western history during the twentieth century.

Thomas R. Trautmann convincingly argues that prior to World War II, especially among the British colonial Sanskritists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the word Aryan actually acted as “a sign of the *kinship* of Britons and Indians.”<sup>89</sup> Trautmann explains that the idea of the Aryan, while being productive of much that is heinous in its later career, also “revolutionized European notions of universal history and ethnology,” stimulating the Aryan brethren theme of later scholars, such as Max Müller, which was British-Indian inclusive.<sup>90</sup> In Trautmann’s own words:

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<sup>87</sup> Franklin, *Oriental Jones* (see note 48), 37.

<sup>88</sup> Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), xi.

<sup>89</sup> Trautmann, *Aryans* (see note 88), xviii.

<sup>90</sup> Trautmann, *Aryans* (see note 88), xviii.

This came to me as an epiphany in Oxford where, in the entryway of the old Indian Institute building, one can read on the foundation stone Sanskrit slokas, composed by Monier-Williams [1819–1899], the Boden Professor of Sanskrit .... the official English translation [is] given on a brass plaque beneath: ... “This building, dedicated to Eastern sciences, was founded for the use of Aryans (Indians and Englishmen) by excellent and benevolent men desirous of encouraging knowledge .... By the favor of God may the learning and literature of India be ever held in honor; and may the mutual friendship of India and England constantly increase!”<sup>91</sup>

Trautmann’s point here is that, in other places and times, a facility marked off for use by Aryans would have explicitly exclusionary connotations, and yet things did not start out that way. This should not exonerate the evil applications of the concept, nor its co-optation by fascism during the twentieth century, but rather like Jones’s academic career, there are two sides to these historical events, a positive and a negative, and thus it is important to remain aware of the dual impact. The legacy of Jones’s life and works ought to be continuously reinterpreted in light of emerging scholarship.

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<sup>91</sup> Trautmann, “Constructing the Racial Theory of Indian Civilization,” *The Aryan Debate* (see note 80), 88.

Allison P. Coudert

# Space, Time, and Identity: Giovanni Battista Piranesi and the Epidemic of *Ennui* in the Pre-Modern West

Printmaker, engraver, and antiquarian Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778) once said: “... I believe that if I were commissioned to design a new universe, I would be mad enough to undertake it.”<sup>1</sup> This is an astonishing statement given that Piranesi’s fame rested on his works depicting the ruins of ancient Rome and his fantastical prison scenes, neither of which showed a new universe but revealed profound anxieties about the one in which he lived and worked. Piranesi’s scenes of Roman ruins reveal the relentless march of time and the failure of anything – much less anything great – to survive intact.<sup>2</sup> With their monumental machines, wheels, levers, pulleys, and cables Piranesi’s prison etchings created a Kafkaesque realm in which space and time are distorted and the small, disoriented figures – presumably including Piranesi himself – clambering up the stairways leading nowhere were representative of many of Piranesi’s contemporaries, who felt trapped in an indifferent universe, the only escape from which led to absolute nothingness or, even worse, into the dark recesses of a monstrous inner self.

This essay takes Piranesi’s disturbing etchings as an entry point to investigate the psychic despair that enveloped a significant number of artists, writers, and intellectuals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Beginning with Pascal in the seventeenth and picking up speed in the two following centuries, a strange disease called “ennui” spread through the intelligentsia. Its symptoms were a feeling of insignificance in a vast, uncaring universe, disgust with the meaningless conventions of bourgeois society, and a terrifying sense of disintegration as the self lost rational control to a demonic “other” lodged within the psyche.<sup>3</sup> By

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1 Cited in David Watkin, *A History of Western Architecture* (London: Laurence King, 2005), 372. Cf. John Wilton-Ely, *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978).

2 To be fair to Piranesi, he did consider himself an architect, and he did design fantastic buildings and building complexes, although none of these were built.

3 This fear of a monstrous inner self is prevalent in those suffering from ennui, as we shall see. But there were some Romantics who relished the fact that while humans had the potential to sink to the level of animals, they could also raise themselves to the rank of angels, a theme that marked Pico della Mirandola’s (1463–1494) “Oration on the Dignity of Man.” This accounts for

the nineteenth century, the epidemic of ennui had spread so extensively that it came to be known as the “mal du siècle” (disease of the century). In a letter to Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), the twenty-year-old Émile Zola (1840–1902) posed the rhetorical question, “Is not frightful ennui the malady with which all of us are afflicted, the wound of the century?”<sup>4</sup> His older contemporary, Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880) asked his friend Louis de Cormenin if he experienced “that modern boredom which gnaws at a man’s entrails and makes of an intelligent being a walking shadow, a thinking phantom.”<sup>5</sup> For those suffering from ennui, the symptoms were clearly unsettling, if not terrifying. However, one can’t help but sense an element of pride in the self-diagnosis of at least some sufferers since its symptoms set them apart from their boorish bourgeois contemporaries, who lacked the sensitivity to appreciate the horrifying realities of the modern world.<sup>6</sup>

When one looks closely at the epidemic of ennui, three things stand out especially clearly. First, it was an urban phenomenon and decidedly gender and class specific. When women suffered from ennui, they were dismissed as hysterics, while newly industrialized workers confessing to the same malady were characterized as unimaginative drones experiencing mundane boredom, not existential ennui.<sup>7</sup> Only middle and upper class males suffered from ennui, and even then only a subset of these – intellectuals and those who saw themselves as underappreciated artistic geniuses. Second, misogyny was a central element in fashionable ennui. And third, while some scholars claim the symptoms of ennui are similar to those of *acedia*, the sin of sloth particularly associated with monks in earlier centuries, modern ennui is just that, modern. Modern ennui is distinct inasmuch as it was rooted in the new attitudes toward time, space, and human identity that emerged as a result of the Protestant Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and

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the romantic idea that deep within even the most animal-like human – Hugo’s hunch-back Quasimodo, for example – there lay an exquisite sensibility waiting to blossom.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in Elizabeth S. Goodstein, *Experience Without Qualities: Boredom and Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 171, n. 102.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in Goodstein, *Experience Without Qualities* (see note 4), 171, n. 102.

<sup>6</sup> This was certainly true of the Goncourt Brothers: “There are moments when, faced with our lack of success, I wonder whether we are failures, proud but impotent. One thing reassures me as to our value: the boredom that afflicts us. It is the hall-mark of quality in modern men ....” Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *Pages from the Goncourt Journals*, ed. and trans. Robert Baldick (New York: New York Review, 1962), 61.

<sup>7</sup> In *The Demon of Noontide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 6–8, Reinhard Kuhn perpetuates this distinction. On the gender and class aspects of boredom, see Martina Kessel, *Langeweile: Zum Umgang mit Zeit und Gefühlen in Deutschland vom späten 18. bis zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 2001); Goodstein, *Experience Without Qualities* (see note 4), 23, 55–61.

the new economic and political realities accompanying the industrial and political revolutions of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In different ways, each of these developments undermined traditional notions of hierarchy and order and loosened the ties binding individuals to each other and to the universe at large.<sup>8</sup>

Enormous cultural shifts occurred in Europe from the mid-fourteenth century onwards as increasing contact with non-Europeans, together with printing and humanist scholarship, raised questions about medieval theology and philosophy. When combined with the profound social and economic changes accompanying the emergence of an increasingly urban, proto-capitalist culture and the wars precipitated by the Reformation, one finds a perfect storm of factors that shattered the teleologically and hierarchically ordered Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmos.<sup>9</sup> With the demise of this worldview went the framework that had for almost two millennia allowed Europeans to understand the world, their place in it, and their purpose and identity. Although many people remained blissfully ignorant of these developments, it is not an exaggeration to say they had tragic effects. However disastrous the Fall and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden were in the minds of believing Christians, the fall from the pre-Copernican into the post-Copernican universe was even more traumatic; for it was not simply a matter of the expulsion of sinful humans with diminished capabilities into a less than perfect world, but the emergence of novel and unsettling questions about the nature and reality of this world and the humans who inhabit it.<sup>10</sup> Fast on the heels of these existential conundrums

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**8** A great deal has been written on this subject. In brief: the Protestant Reformation demolished the ideal of Christian unity, dividing Christians into warring camps. The Copernican Revolution undermined the Aristotelian worldview and the ideal of “The Great Chain of Being,” cosmic structures that for some two millennia had provided humans with a coherent explanation of man’s nature, his place in the universe, and his relationship to God, his fellow humans, and the natural world. The industrial revolution and the urbanization that accompanied it, together with the growth of capitalism, obliterated traditional communal ties. While many people applauded the growing individualism, social mobility, and the tolerance for new ways of thinking that came with these developments, others lamented them, excoriating the alienation, anomie, atheism, and agnosticism they fostered.

**9** *Telos*, Greek for “end” or “purpose.” According to Aristotelian philosophy, every created thing has a specific end or purpose, what we would describe today as its own DNA. An acorn’s *telos* is to become an oak, just as a child’s is to become an adult.

**10** Anthony Grafton, “The Importance of Being Printed,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 11 (1980/1): 265–86; idem (with April Shelford and Nancy Siraisi), *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992); Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transmissions in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American In-*

came the horrifying possibility that not only was knowledge unattainable in any absolute form, but the very existence of a stable, substantial, and reliable knower had become problematic.

Jonathan Z. Smith has emphasized the importance of place in a culture's and an individual's self-perception. Since social change is inseparable from symbolic change, the question people ask and need to answer to ensure a stable existence is "where do I stand?" As Smith says: "At the heart of the issue of change are the symbolic-social questions: What is the place on which I stand? What are my horizons? What are my limits?"<sup>11</sup> These were precisely the questions that preoccupied and, in many cases, terrified individuals in the early modern world as they cleared away the debris of outmoded symbolic structures and struggled to build new ones to accommodate a changing world. To quote Smith once again: "To change stance is to totally alter one's symbols and to inhabit a different world."<sup>12</sup>

What thinking Europeans were forced to confront in the early modern period was radical change, and this confrontation required altering the way they viewed the universe, their culture, and their fellow humans. No longer living in an earth-centered universe in which heaven was suitably situated in the perfect, unchanging, celestial sphere and hell in the bowels of the earth, the darkest, densest and, by implication, foulest part of the physical universe, post-Copernican men and women found themselves inhabiting one planet among many, hurtling through space at incredible speeds. Not only was the formerly stable earth spinning around its own axis as it simultaneously traveled around the sun, but all this took place in what now appeared to be an infinite universe of unfathomable vastness. The idea of space changed radically in this new universe, where there was no longer a clear sense of "up" or "down" and hence no commonsensical place for heaven or hell. Furthermore, if earth had no privileged position but was merely one of many planets, did that mean that Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection had to be repeated on every planet in every solar system in an infinite universe? Pondering such questions led the Englishman John Edwards to conclude that if Copernicus were correct, "this terrestrial Globe is a despicable spot, a speck, a Point in

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*dian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Influence of Symbols on Social Change: A Place on Which to Stand," id., *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 129–46.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, "The Influence of Symbols on Social Change" (see note 11), 143.



Comparison of the vast and spacious congeries of the sun and fixed Lights.”<sup>13</sup> Piranesi’s etching were a product of these dramatic developments.

Neither the subject of ruins nor prisons was original with Piranesi. Many contemporary novels, short stories, and plays involved both. Ruins and prisons were a staple of Gothic fiction, and prison scenes appeared so frequently in operas that constructing them became an expected part of the skillset of early-modern stage-designers. This has led one modern critic to argue that Piranesi was simply cashing in on the prevailing vogue for the Gothic.<sup>14</sup> Other critics, however, view Piranesi’s ruins and prisons as illustrative of the dark side of Romanticism that called into question the liberal and optimistic ideas of many progressive enlightenment thinkers. Aldous Huxley is one of the most eloquent of these. In his introduction to an edition of Piranesi’s prison engravings, he emphasizes their “perfect pointlessness” since nothing could possibly function in these squalid, vertiginous, and incomprehensible spaces.<sup>15</sup>

Huxley saw something new and unexpected in these etchings. He singles out plate VII of the second series of prison etchings as the most disturbing of all because of the looming, tower-like structure on the viewer’s right side of the print. This looks uncannily like Jeremy Bentham’s (1748–1832) Panopticon, which Bentham devised in 1791, some twenty years after the publication of Piranesi’s series. Bentham himself described the Panopticon as “a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example.”<sup>16</sup> Elsewhere, he likened the Panopticon to “a mill for grinding rogues honest.”<sup>17</sup> That genial Jeremy Bentham should so enthusiastically endorse this ominous form of mind-control during the Enlightenment was one of the examples given by Michel Foucault to support his radical reevaluation of

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13 Cited in Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 179. It must be emphasized that the consequences of Copernicanism took time to sink in. Robert S. Westman concludes that before 1600 there were only ten European thinkers who accepted the physical truth of Copernicus’s theory. See his “The Astronomer’s Role in the Sixteenth Century: A Preliminary Survey,” *History of Science* 18 (1980): 105–47. But if the acceptance of Copernicanism was delayed, there were many other cracks developing in the Ptolemaic-Aristotelian worldview that undermined traditional assumptions: for example, the observations and theories of Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler, Galileo’s discovery of spots on the sun, craters on the moon, and the moons of Jupiter, all of which undermined the idea of the heavens as perfect and unchanging, as did new ideas about meteors and comets.

14 William L. MacDonald, *Piranesi’s Carceri: Sources of Invention* (Northampton, MA: Smith College, 1979), 11–13.

15 Aldous Huxley, *Prisons with the “Carceri” Etchings by G. B. Piranesi*. Critical Study by Jean Adhemar (London: The Trianon Press, 1949), 21.

16 Jeremy Bentham, *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, published under the Superintendence of his Executor, John Bowring (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1838–1843), 11 vols. 4: 39.

17 Jeremy Bentham, *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* (see note 16), 10: 226. Letter To Brissot.

the age of reason as one of incarceration rather than freedom.<sup>18</sup> It was certainly taken that way by Huxley, whose own *Brave New Worlds* was one of the many dystopias written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In Huxley's view, the Panopticon embodied the kind of instrumental reason described by Max Weber (1864–1920), which developed during the Enlightenment, turning men into amoral machines.<sup>19</sup>

We know that Piranesi led a strange and for the most part solitary life, single-mindedly dedicated to his art. But we have little information about his psychic states to help us understand his penchant for gloomy, disorienting scenes of incarceration and ruin. The series of engravings known as “The Grotteschi” (ca. 1745) are especially striking in this regard. They feature piles of broken statuary, skulls, moss-covered urns, gesticulating skeletons, fallen pillars, a sarcophagus, coiling serpents, a Medusa head, smoking antique lamps, and an hourglass.<sup>20</sup> Miranda Harvey sees this jumble of objects as obsessively illustrating the theme of *memento mori* and the relentless, inescapable passing of time:

Whatever their true meaning ... all the plates undoubtedly transmit an overpowering sense of decay and putrefaction. All recall the past splendor of classical Rome, now broken and ruined, the paraphernalia of neglected pagan gods and the tombs of forgotten Emperors: the glories of an Empire that declined and fell through its own corruption, decadence and pride, echoing the ironic fate of Shelley's Ozymandias, the “king of kings” who dared to think his works could defy the ages ...<sup>21</sup>

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**18** Foucault described the Panopticon as “a new physics of power” and a “cruel, ingenious cage,” a symbol of the “society of surveillance” in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1975; New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 208–09. Foucault overlooked Bentham's insistence that prisoners must be treated fairly and that their health and education must be of concern. See Janel Semple, *Bentham's Prison: A Study of the Panopticon Penitentiary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

**19** “The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the ‘disenchantment of the world.’” Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” *Essays in Sociology*, ed. and trans. Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 129–56; here 155. This essay was originally published as “Wissenschaft als Beruf.” It was delivered at Munich University in 1918 and published by Dunker & Humboldt Verlag (Munich, 1919).

**20** Miranda Harvey, *Piranesi: The Imaginary Views* (New York: Harmony Books, 1979), 8.

**21** Harvey, *Piranesi*, 8. The contemplation of ruins has a long history in the West as part of the common theme in pagan and Christian thought of *memento mori*. But those disgusted with modern culture saw more in ruins than this. As César Graña points out in *Modernity and its Discontents*, *Researches in the Social, Cultural and Behavioral Sciences*, Harper Torchbooks, 1318 (New York, Evanston, IL, and London: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), “What they saw in ruins was the work of nature, as the avenger of the sensitive but powerless person in the face of technological arrogance” (136). As Flaubert wrote: “I love above all the sight of vegetation resting upon the old ruins; this embrace of nature coming swiftly to bury the work of man the moment that his hand is no longer there to define it, fills me with deep joy” (cited in Graña, 137).

The themes of death, decay, and the swift passage of time are certainly common features of Romantic imagery and appear in Shelley's poem. But Shelley was an optimist, who, according to his wife Mary, believed in perfectionism.<sup>22</sup> The tenor of Piranesi's etchings is far more sinister and closer to the kind of gloomy musing about death and madness in François-René de Chateaubriand's (1768–1832) chilling short story "René" or in Edgar Allan Poe's "Berenice." This is a subject we will return to when discussing the theme of the disintegrating self that appears so frequently in the work of the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artists suffering from ennui.

While it is impossible to know what prompted Piranesi to make these etching, their real importance lies in the effects they had on those who viewed them. Among Piranesi's first admirers were the Scottish architect Robert Adam (1728–1782) and the writer Horace Walpole (1717–1797), who built Strawberry Hill and wrote the first English Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*. This generation of admirers greeted Piranesi's etchings with the pleasurable frisson of Edmund Burke's (1729–1797) sublime.<sup>23</sup> Only with the next generation of Englishmen, men like William Thomas Beckford (1760–1844), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834), Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859), and J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851) did the prison etchings gain wide popularity. It was at this juncture that Burke's sublime gave way to something more menacing and consequential – at least for those artists and writers discussed in this essay – to the dread associated with the void, le néant, le gouffle, noia, Langeweile, the abyss, and the labyrinth, all terms used by those suffering from the "mal du siècle" and reacting to what they saw as the pointlessness of the universe and human existence.<sup>24</sup> We can see this transformation in Beckford's emotional response to a gondola ride under the Venetian

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<sup>22</sup> Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 385–86.

<sup>23</sup> In 1757 Burke published *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, in which he associated the beautiful with the tenets of neoclassical art – balance, proportion, harmony – and juxtaposed these qualities to the astonishment, terror, even horror aroused by the sublimity of romantic art and literature.

<sup>24</sup> As George Rousseau and Roy Porter claim, for all its optimism, there was a deep strand of pessimism in the Enlightenment: "An ominous cloud hovered over the Enlightenment: the fear that, for all their faith in humanity, all their secular evangelizing, all their optimistic demythologizing crusades, the human animal might not prove fit for the programs of education, organization, and consciousness-raising the *philosophes* were mobilizing." See their introduction to George S. Rousseau, ed., *The Languages of Psyche: Mind and Body in Enlightenment Thought* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 39–40. This kind of pessimism grew stronger at the end of the eighteenth century in the wake of the French Revolution and became characteristic of Romanticism, especially in its "dark" variety.

Bridge of Sighs in 1780, two years after Piranesi's death. His description is pure Piranesi:

[I] ... shuddered whilst passing below; and believe it is not without cause, this structure is named PONTE DEI SOSPIRI. Horrors and dismal prospects haunted my fancy on my return. I could not dine in peace, so strongly was my imagination affected; but snatching my pencil, I drew chasms with subterraneous hollows, the domain of fear and torture, with chains, racks, wheels, and dreadful engines in the style of Piranesi.<sup>25</sup>

Beckford incorporates Piranesian imagery in his Gothic novel *Vathek* (1786). The caliph Vathek and his companions have been admitted to Eblis, the immense palace of the Prince of Darkness. Having descended interminable stairs and entering through a vast ebony portal, they discover

... rows of columns and arcades, which gradually diminished till they terminated in a point radiant as the sun. ... A throng of genii, and their fantastic spirits, of either sex danced lasciviously at the sound of music which issued from beneath. In the midst of this immense hall, a vast multitude was incessantly passing, who severally kept their right hands on their hearts, without once regarding anything around them: they had all the livid paleness of death. Their eyes deep sunk in their sockets resemble those phosphoric meteors that glimmer by night in places of internment. Some stalked slowly on, absorbed in profound reveries; some shrieking with agony ran furiously about like tigers wounded with poisoned arrows, whilst others, grinding their teeth in rage, foamed along more than the wildest maniac. They all avoided each other; and, though surrounded by a multitude that no one could number, each wandered at random, unheeding of the rest, as if alone on a desert where no foot had trodden.<sup>26</sup>

As we shall see, the image of vast spaces thronged by multitudes of fearsome individuals with no apparent connection to each other appears often in Thomas De Quincey's writings as well as in the writings of other sufferers from ennui, especially those who were opium addicts.

Coleridge shared this darker vision of Burke's sublime. While in the company of Thomas De Quincey, who was glancing through Piranesi's etching of Roman ruins, Coleridge turned the subject to the prison etchings, claiming they were very like scenes from the dreams he had while in a fevered state. De Quincey was interested enough to remember Coleridge's description almost word for word:

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<sup>25</sup> William Beckford, *The History of the Caliph Vathek; and European Travels*. The Minerva Library of Famous Books, ed. G.T. Bettany (London, New York, and Melbourne: Word, Lock and Co, 1891), 166.

<sup>26</sup> *English Poetry and Prose of the Romantic Movement*, ed. George Benjamin Woods (New York and Chicago: Scott, Foresment Co., 1916), 141.

Many years ago, when I was looking over Piranesi's *Antiquities of Rome*, Mr. Coleridge, who was standing by, described to me a set of plates by that artist, ... which record the scenery of his own visions during the delirium of a fever. Some of them (I describe only from memory of Mr. Coleridge's account) represented vast Gothic halls: on the floor of which stood all sorts of engines and machinery, wheels, cables, pulleys, levers, catapults, &c.&c. expressive of enormous power put forth and resistance overcome. Creeping his way upwards, was Piranesi himself: follow the stairs a little further, and you perceive it come to a sudden abrupt termination, without any balustrade, and allowing no step onwards to him who had reached the extremity, except into the depths below. Whatever is to become of poor Piranesi, you suppose, at least, that his labours must in some way terminate here. But raise your eyes, and behold a second flight of stairs still higher: on which again Piranesi is perceived, but this time standing on the very brink of the abyss. Again elevate your eye, and a still more aerial flight of stairs is beheld: and again is poor Piranesi busy on his aspiring labours: and so on, until the unfinished stairs and Piranesi both are lost in the upper gloom of the hall, – With the same power of endless growth and self-reproduction did my architecture proceed in dreams. In the early stage of my malady, the splendours of my dreams were indeed chiefly architectural: and I beheld such pomp of cities and palaces as was never yet beheld by the waking eye, unless in the clouds.<sup>27</sup>

The problem was that in the latter stages of Coleridge's malady, which was opium addiction, his splendid architectural visions gave way to the kind of desolate urban nightmares engraved by Piranesi.<sup>28</sup> It wasn't only opium addicts, however, who had these dark visions of the chaos and essential meaningless of life, particularly urban life. As Robert Martin Adams points out in his insightful book, *Nil: Episodes in the Literary Conquest of Void During the 19th Century*, the concept of "nothing" or the void achieved a prominent place in the thought of key artists and writers across Europe, America, and Russia.

Adams admits there is something perverse about studying the nineteenth century through the lens of nothingness. How can an age generally recognized for its inventiveness, creativity, and the sheer magnitude of the scientific and technological achievements that brought to daily life telegraphs, telephones, electric lighting, indoor plumbing, and trains that crossed continents in days instead of months be viewed from the perspective of a void?<sup>29</sup> Such a perspective goes against the grain;

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater and Other Writings*, ed. Robert Morrison (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2013), 69–70.

<sup>28</sup> In *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1968), Alethea Hayter provides evidence to show that under the influence of opium addiction, what at first were pleasurable dreams of vast and splendid architectural structures gave way to terrifying visions of entrapment and enclosure.

<sup>29</sup> The great French historian Fernand Braudel claimed that lives across the globe were pretty much the same from early history until 1800 when urbanization and industrialization radically transformed society. Karl Polyani is one of many scholars to discuss this great transformation as

it “is like reading a photograph from the negative, or a print from the plate.”<sup>30</sup> While fully accepting that much occurred to alter human life for the better, Adams insists that it is a mistake to ignore the very powerful negative effects such radical changes had on sensitive psyches. It is not that good things didn’t happen; it is simply that emphasizing the pluses leaves out the other half of the story. It is not a matter of either-or as much as both-and. I would add that the ambivalent attitude toward change that developed in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries laid the foundation for subsequent anti-modernist authoritarian and fundamentalist political and religious movements as well as their progressive utopian counterparts.

Adams was writing in the late 1960s when post-war ideas about the dawning of a new age were beginning to lose their luster in the face of the Vietnam War and the spate of assassinations that left progressives reeling. He was therefore sensitive to the shift from the pleasure of the sublime to the *horror vacui* of what might be called the post-sublime. This shift was recognized in the eighteenth century as well. In their essay “The Pleasures of Terror” (1773), Anna Letitia Aikin (later Barbauld) and her brother John Aikin contend that the amazement and bewilderment that come with a pleasurable sense of terror can only be awakened if the imagined is seen as beyond the ordinary. Otherwise one will experience pain: “Hence, the more wild, fanciful, and extraordinary are the circumstances of a scene of horror, the more pleasure we receive from it; and where they are too near common nature, though violently borne by curiosity through the adventure, we cannot repeat it or reflect on it, without an over-balance of pain.” In saying this, the Aikins clarified Burke’s contention that to experience the sublime pleasure of terror we must remain in a place of safety. It is this distance that allows us to feel the intensity of pain without actually being in pain. Beginning in the seventeenth and escalating in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the place of

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the market economy based on rational utility replaced traditional economies grounded in reciprocity and redistribution. See *The Great Transformation* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944).

**30** Robert Martin Adams, *Nil: Episodes in the Literary Conquest of the Void During the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 14. The negative view of modernity presented by Adams and by me in this essay does go against the grain and contradict what Hayden White has described as the “romance” of European history presented by many intellectuals at the time, who conceived of history as moving toward a happy ending. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 8, 11, 150–52. While I have concentrated on writers and artists in this essay, intellectuals and scholars of the ilk of Nietzsche, Bachofen, Burckhardt, and Overbeck, not to mention many more, rejected the prevailing optimism. See Lionel Grossman, *Basel in the Age of Burckhardt: A Study in Unseasonable Ideas* (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 2000); Zeev Sternhell, *The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition*, trans. David Maisel (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

safety and the distance necessary to separate us from the actual pain of terror disappeared for many people. For them, what became ever clearer was that the universe had become increasingly alien. With the discovery of microscopes and telescopes and the displacement of earth from the center of the universe things had become either too small or too large for the human senses to perceive. The universe and humans were no longer commensurate, undermining that ancient and comforting idea that man was the lesser world, the microcosm, mirroring the larger universe or macrocosm.

We see this sense of alienation clearly in Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), the French Jansenist mathematician, scientist, and philosopher. Pascal's horrified recognition of the insignificant place of humans in the universe reflected the disorienting effect of the idea of an infinite universe and perhaps his own discovery that vacuums exist in nature. As he says, "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me."<sup>31</sup> Fear and astonishment sum up Pascal's reaction to this new situation, but there is nothing pleasurable about either. His description of himself anticipates Piranesi's tiny figures clambering up endless stairways going nowhere:

When I consider the brief duration of my life, absorbed in the eternity that lies before and after ... the little space I occupy and can even see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces I do not know and that do not know me, I am frightened and astonished to see myself here rather than there; for there is no reason why I am here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who put me here? By whose order and direction have this place and time been allotted to me?<sup>32</sup>

Pascal is aghast at the profound and insurmountable ignorance that prohibits him from finding any rational solution to his dreadful predicament. The fact that man is trapped and there is absolutely no possibility of escape adds to human wretchedness. This is a theme that later sufferers from *ennui* stress:

When I see man's blindness and wretchedness, when I consider the whole silent universe and man left to himself without light, as though lost in his corner of the universe, not knowing who put him there, what he has come to do, what will become of him at death, incapable of any understanding, I become frightened, like someone brought in his sleep to a frightening desert island who wakes up with no knowledge or means of escape. And then I marvel that we do not fall into despair in so wretched a state.<sup>33</sup>

In short, Pascal compares himself to a weak reed, lacking agency in an unfathomable and indifferent universe. The fact that humans think and can understand

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<sup>31</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis, IN, and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2005), 64.

<sup>32</sup> Pascal, *Pensées* (see note 31), 22.

<sup>33</sup> Pascal, *Pensées* (see note 31), 57–58.

their predicament makes their situation all the more unbearable, although Pascal tries to save some face for humans by suggesting this knowledge reveals their superiority to the blind forces of nature that destroy them. But this bit of bravado is cold comfort indeed:

Man is only a reed, the weakest thing in nature, but he is a thinking reed. The whole universe does not need to take up arms to crush him: a vapor, a drop of water, is enough to kill him. But if the universe were to crush him, man would still be nobler than what killed him, because he knows he is dying and the advantage the universe has over him. The universe knows nothing of this.<sup>34</sup>

The theme of nature's indifference gnawed at the consciousness of an increasing number of artists and writers after Pascal. But where Pascal could and did take a leap of faith and accept the existence of a god who cared for his creatures, this leap became increasingly untenable for those "sick souls," to use William James's (1842–1910) evocative phrase, suffering from ennui. For these, god had vanished or, even worse, had been replaced by a malevolent force that lay within themselves. Humans were divided beings, trapped in an oblivious universe and forced to contend with the meaningless conventions of bourgeois society. Anxiety, alienation, and anomie characterized their state of mind. Pascal predicted that this would happen in a universe devoid of god when he wrote in his *Pensées*, "... without the hunger for spiritual thing, we would get bored. ..."<sup>35</sup> Xavier de Maistre (1763–1852) was one of these "sick souls," suffering from inescapable boredom in a world without god.

De Maistre is little remembered today.<sup>36</sup> But his *Voyage Around My Room* (1795) exhibits many of the symptoms of those suffering from the world's indifference and their own insignificance. Unlike his insensitive and deluded bourgeois contemporaries, he accepts his fate with an professed insouciance that distinguishes him from them. De Maistre's book was published twenty-one year after Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), and while de Maistre, like young Werther, despises and longs to escape from the world of bourgeois conventions, the tenor of his complaints about the universe are more dismal and disturbing, though far less histrionic. Yes, Werther kills himself because he cannot bear the world without his beloved Lotte, who is betrothed to another man, but de Maistre's fate is even more disquieting because he will die wanting and bewailing nothing. The genial and often humorous voice in which de Maistre tells his sorry tale makes his predicament

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<sup>34</sup> Pascal, *Pensées* (see note 31), 64.

<sup>35</sup> Pascal, *Pensées* (see note 31), 284.

<sup>36</sup> Xavier was the more genial younger brother of the acerbic Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821), who represented the Catholic reaction against the Enlightenment in all its caustic bitterness. The elder de Maistre is often seen as a forerunner of Fascism.



all the more existentially tragic precisely because he lacks the romantic longings characteristic of Werther. He looks into the void with eyes wide open.

De Maistre's small masterpiece was written during the period of forty-two days he was put under house arrest for dueling. In his ironic introduction he claims his book is a useful antidote to boredom:

I have just completed a forty-two day voyage around my room. The fascinating observations I made and the endless pleasures I experienced along the way made me wish to share my travels with the public. ... Words cannot describe the satisfaction I feel in my heart when I think of the infinite number of unhappy souls for whom I am providing an antidote to boredom and a palliative to their ills."<sup>37</sup>

De Maistre is alienated from his fellow men. He despises bourgeois society and makes a point of ridiculing the illogic of prevailing social conventions. "[T]ry, if you can," he asks the reader, "to grasp the logic that I am about to set forth to you." Take, for example, the case of dueling, he suggests, the very crime for which he has been kept under house arrest. "What could be more natural and proper," he exclaims ironically, "than to engage in mutual slaughter with someone who has inadvertently stepped on your foot or blurted out a few stinging remarks in a moment of spite occasioned by your own indiscretion, or who had the misfortune of catching your mistress's fancy? ... Nothing could be more logical, and yet there are people who disapprove of this laudable custom!"

But this isn't the end of the confusion, for as de Maistre goes on to say, "Yet equally logical as the rest is that these same disapproving people, who want us to consider it a grave misdeed, would reserve still harsher treatment for anyone who refused to commit it." Since law and custom differ on this matter, de Maistre suggests that if one is involved in "what is called an affair of honor, it may not be ill-advised to draw lots. ..." <sup>38</sup> So much for the ideal of honor in enlightened, rational, eighteenth-century France. As the day of his freedom approaches, de Maistre questions what freedom means, claiming that he is actually freer in the confined space of his room than in the outside world, where individuals are stifled by the inanities of bourgeois conventions: "So today is the day of my freedom, or rather the day that I shall put my shackles back on. The yoke of worldly matters will weigh heavy on me once again; I shall no longer take a single step that is not measured by decorum and duty."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Xavier De Maistre, *Voyage Around My Room*. Selected works of Xavier de Maistre, trans. Stephen Sartarelli (New York: A New Directions Book, 1994), 3.

<sup>38</sup> De Maistre, *Voyage* (see note 37), 6–7.

<sup>39</sup> De Maistre, *Voyage* (see note 37), 78.

De Maistre is acutely aware of how deceptive appearances can be. In bourgeois society clothes literally make the man:

... among the class of men in whose midst I live, how many are there who, seeing themselves clad in a uniform, firmly believe themselves to be officers – until the sudden appearance of the enemy undeceives them – Or worse still, if it pleases the king to allow one of them to add some embroidery to his dress, suddenly he thinks he's a general, and the whole army also gives him this title without laughing – so great is clothing's influence on the human imagination.<sup>40</sup>

Clothes are a disguise; they cover and conceal the inner self, and for de Maistre this inner self is a monster, or what he calls “the beast.” Nearly a hundred years before Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894) wrote his chilling novel *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), De Maistre sees himself as so many of his contemporaries saw themselves as divided into a superficial civilized soul and a bestial other:

I have noticed, through many and sundry observations, that man is made up of a soul and a beast – These two beings are absolutely distinct, yet so contained within one another, or rather on top of one another, that the soul must in some way be superior to the beast and be able to make such a distinction.<sup>41</sup>

De Maistre claims to have conducted many experiments on the union of these “two heterogeneous creatures,” and he has discovered that while the soul can command obedience from the beast, the latter can very often compel the soul to act against its will. He has concluded that “the great skill of a man of genius lies in knowing how to bring his beast up well, so that he may go his own way in the world while the soul, released from this distressing intimacy, raises herself to the heaven.”<sup>42</sup>

As we have seen, de Maistre claims his book will be a useful antidote for those like himself suffering from ennui. “Let all the wretched, the sick, and the bored follow me,” he exhorts. He advises all would be reformers, revolutionaries, and even those planning to withdraw from the world to “heed my call and forget those dark ideas” since “you are losing time for pleasure, while gaining none for wisdom.” The only way to deal with the dismal fate awaiting every human is to “accompany me on my voyage” because “we shall travel by short stages, laughing all along the way ... . [A]bandoning ourselves gaily to our fancy, we shall follow it wherever it wishes to take us.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> De Maistre, *Voyage* (see note 37), 69.

<sup>41</sup> De Maistre, *Voyage* (see note 37), 11.

<sup>42</sup> De Maistre, *Voyage* (see note 37), 11.

<sup>43</sup> De Maistre, *Voyage* (see note 37), 5.

De Maistre's book may have provided an antidote to boredom, but his ruminations on nature's utter indifference to human life and the divided nature of his own self would have been more likely to intensify rather than palliate the dread experienced by fellow-sufferers of ennui. At one point in his narrative, he reminisces about the death of a dear friend, concluding, "Man is nothing but a phantom, a shadow, a mist that scatters in air." His death is no more significant than the death of a butterfly.<sup>44</sup>

A similar sense of the futility of life appears in Étienne Pivert de Senancour's (1770–1846) epistolary novel *Obermann* (1802). Like de Maistre, the eponymous hero deplores bourgeois society. He renounces Paris and his business interests and moves to the mountain wilds of Switzerland to escape both. Obermann shows the same apparent insouciance as de Maistre in the face of life's horrors. In a series of soliloquies he rejects the vacuous existence of ordinary people, lamenting "... those turbid cares which devour men's little space, confusing his life with the blank which precedes it and the blank that follows it, leaving it no further prerogative than to be itself a less placid nothing."<sup>45</sup> He is sarcastic about the idea of an afterlife. Death is final; life goes out like a fire in a fireplace: "when the fire in your hearth is put out, the light, the heat, the movement ... leave it ... and pass into another world there to be rewarded eternally if it has warmed your feet, or eternally punished if it has scorched your slippers."<sup>46</sup> The only reality is nothing or the void.

Although Obermann professes his love of humanity, he is alienated from others and filled with disgust and despair. He observes everything around him but is incapable of empathy:

I am alone; the uncommunicated energies of my heart react and pause within. Behold me in the world, solitary amidst the throng which is to one as nothing, like one long afflicted by an accidental deafness, whose hungry eye is fixed on all those mute beings surging so feverishly past him! He sees all, and yet all is denied him; he divines those sounds which he loves, seeks them and hears them not; he endures the silence of all things in the midst of the rumor of the world. All unfolds before him and he can grasp nothing. In all external things there dwells the universal harmony; it is present to his imagination, but is no longer in his heart; he is cut off from the concourse of the living. There is no communication henceforth. All things for him exist in vain; ... he lives alone; he is as one absent in the living world.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> De Maistre, *Voyage* (see note 37), 32–33.

<sup>45</sup> Étienne Pivert de Senancour, *Obermann*, trans. Arthur Edward Waite (London: Philip Welby, 1903), 53. This can be found online at: [http://www.archive.org/stream/obermann00senauoft/obermann00senauoft\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/obermann00senauoft/obermann00senauoft_djvu.txt) (last accessed on Sept. 21, 2017).

<sup>46</sup> Senancour, *Obermann* (see note 45), 163–64.

<sup>47</sup> Senancour, *Obermann* (see note 45), 81.

Obermann wants truth and stability in a world that offers neither. He is tormented by the shadowy nature of reality. Nothing is fixed, permanent, stable, and comprehensible, including himself. He likens himself to a meteor lost in the void. Time relentlessly marches on, but all we really know are the end moments. We know nothing in themselves, and what we think we know is delusional: “Every form changes, all duration slips away; and the agony of the insatiable heart is but the blind course of a meteor wandering in the void where it must be lost.”<sup>48</sup>

Obermann feels trapped in the monstrous grip of a nature that engulfs him, leaving him spent and powerless:

When the resistance, the inertia of a dead, rude, depraved power ensnares, enwinds, oppresses and plunges us in uncertainties, disgust, frivolities and cruel or senseless excesses; when we know nothing and possess nothing; when all things marshal before us like the grotesque images of a odious or absurd dream, who shall repress in our hearts the need of another order, another nature?<sup>49</sup>

The best he can hope for is to teach his “eager and simple heart. ... to find nourishment in its deprivation, to repose in the void, to keep at peace in this hateful silence, to subsist amidst the dumbness of Nature.”<sup>50</sup>

The Italian poet, essayist, and philosopher Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837), also known as “the hunchback of Recanati,” had more reason to reject the world and his fellow humans than the relatively healthy individuals described so far, but the fact that his writings found an appreciative audience – as well, admittedly, as fierce critics – shows that his nihilistic view of life resonated with many of his contemporaries.<sup>51</sup> The most concise statement of Leopardi’s worldview can be found in an entry he made in his vast notebook, known as the “Zibaldone,” in 1826:

Everything is evil. I mean, everything that is, is wicked; every existing thing is an evil; everything exists for a wicked end. Existence is a wickedness and is ordained for wickedness. Evil is the end, the final purpose, of the universe. ... The only good is nonbeing; the only really good thing is the thing that is *not*, things that are *not* things; all things are bad.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Senancour, *Obermann* (see note 45), 256.

<sup>49</sup> Senancour, *Obermann* (see note 45), 91.

<sup>50</sup> Senancour, *Obermann* (see note 45), 27.

<sup>51</sup> John Galassi, the translator of Leopardi’s “Canti” into English, claims that this collection is “one of the most influential works of the nineteenth century and one of the great achievements of Italian poetry.” See Giacomo Leopardi, *Canti*, trans. Jonathan Galassi (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 2010), introduction, xiii.

<sup>52</sup> Cited in Adam Kirsch, “Under the Volcano: Giacomo Leopardi’s Radical Despair,” *The New Yorker* (October 25, 2010) <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/25/under-the-volcano-adam-kirsch> (last accessed on Sept. 21, 2017). See also id., “Giacomo Leopardi’s ‘Zibaldone,’ the Least Known Masterpiece of European Literature,” *The New Republic* (November 8, 2013);

Once again, this is not the seductive melancholy of the Romantics, who recognize the shortcomings of this world but envisioned the possibility of something better. This is the post-sublime at its darkest, deepest pitch of melancholy and ennui. The world is a prison from which there is no escape, not even in death, which is simply the last act in a pointless, miserable existence. Humans are like a “little, old, white-haired man,” who

... at last he comes  
to where his way  
and all his efforts led him:  
terrible, immense abyss  
into which he falls, forgetting everything.  
This, O virgin moon,  
Is human life.<sup>53</sup>

Human pleasures and pains are illusions, the only true reality is nothingness. In another passage from his notebook, Leopardi expresses his terror at the sheer nothingness of everything, including himself “I was terrified to find myself in the midst of nothing, and myself nothing. I felt as if I were suffocating, believing and feeling that everything is nothing, solid nothing.”<sup>54</sup> In his last poem, “Broom, or the Flower of the Desert,” which describes the eruption of Vesuvius that smothered once fertile fields “with sterile ashes, blanketed by hardened lava,” Leopardi echoes de Maistre’s lament that the universe cares as little about a human death as that of an insect: “Nature has no more esteem/ or care for the seed of man/ than for the ant.”<sup>55</sup> Leopardi repeats a theme made popular by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) that civilization has cut man off from the life of his senses and the power of the imagination. But while Rousseau proposed a solution through the education of honest, upright, thoughtful citizens after the model of *Émile*, Leopardi envisioned nothing but a slow death in life, or *noia*, which leads to the complete absence of feeling. “Oh happy one for whom lament was life! / Boredom wrapped us in our swaddling clothes;/ and nothingness guards our cradle and our tomb.”<sup>56</sup> Unlike de Maistre or Obermann, Leopardi

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Luciano Manglati, “Studio Matto e Disperatissimi: The Life and Writings of Giacomo Leopardi,” *Open Letter Monthly: an Arts and Literature Review* (December 1, 2013) <https://www.open-lettersmonthly.com/studio-matto-e-disperatissimo-the-life-and-writings-of-giacomo-leopardi/> (last accessed on Sept. 21, 2017)

53 Leopardi, “Night Song of a Wandering Shepherd in Asia,” *Canti* (see note 51), 195.

54 Cited in Adams, *Nil* (see note 30), 230.

55 Leopardi, “Broom, or the Flower of the Desert,” *Canti* (see note 51), 289, 303.

56 Leopardi, “To Angelo Mai,” *Canti* (see note 51), 33.

does not even try to put on a brave face in defiance of what he knows is inevitable: “I feel my heart break, and I’m totally/ inconsolable about my fate.”<sup>57</sup>

Leopardi’s older contemporary, the Italian poet and novelist Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873), most famous for his psychologically penetrating novel *The Betrothed* (1825–1827), was highly critical of Leopardi’s nihilism, which he summed up as, “I am hunchbacked and ill, and therefore there is no God.” Leopardi responded by daring anyone who read his works to show what he wrote was untrue: “I ... beg my readers to try to controvert my remarks and my arguments, rather than accuse my ill-health.”<sup>58</sup> Life simply is futile and meaningless as well as cruel and unjust. In his poem “To Count Carlo Pepoli” Leopardi is eloquent in showing how his contemporaries tried and failed to find anything meaningful in the insignificant events of daily life:

For one, the cult of clothing and hairdressing,  
of doing, coming, and going, the empty interest  
in carriages and horse,  
busy salons and noisy squares and gardens,  
games and dinners and exclusive dances,  
takes up his attention night and day.  
Laughter never falls from his lips: but in his heart, alas,  
Deep down, heavy, massive, motionless,  
Immortal boredom sits like adamant,  
Against which all the energy of youth  
Is useless. Not even a sweet word  
From a rosy lip will send it packing,  
Or the tender, trembling glance  
Of two dark eyes, the loving look,  
The human thing that is most worthy of heaven.<sup>59</sup>

The fictional character who invests most heavily in these kinds of trivial pursuits to escape the boredom of daily life is Joris-Karl Huysmans’s (1848–1907) Jean des Esseintes, the protagonist of his 1884 novel *À Rebours* (*Against the Grain* or *Against Nature*). Des Esseintes goes to inordinate lengths to escape ennui. His encyclopedic lists of things with which to while away the time are nothing like Rabelais’s “chaotic enumeration,” as scholars have called it – those endless lists of things like the games played by Pantagruel, the types and kinds of fools and ball-bags, and an enumeration of the world’s poisonous reptiles

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<sup>57</sup> Leopardi, “The Recollections,” *Canti* (see note 51), 185.

<sup>58</sup> Cited in Kirsch, “Under the Volcano” (see note 52).

<sup>59</sup> Leopardi, *Canti* (see note 51), 153.

and insects.<sup>60</sup> There is no sense of exuberance, satire, or just plain fun in des Esseintes' lists as there is in Rabelais'; they are simply catalogues of material objects, substances, and activities – furnishings, colors, odors, plants, perversities, juice-extractors, enema bags, Latin texts – none of which can fill the gaping void of Des Esseintes's existence. A favorite adjective of Des Esseintes is "vide" or empty; it is applied to Virgil, Lucan, as well as Victor Hugo. The taste organs he dreams up hardly fit with his delicate digestion, nor do the women he remembers bring much beside anxiety and disappointment. *À Rebours* ends with Des Esseintes poised for a leap into the dark; having exhausted nature and the unnatural, he is now ready for the supernatural. The novel is in effect Pascal's *Pensées* writ large; it carries the dialogue of boredom and satiety to the point of ultimate impasse.<sup>61</sup>

The authors described so far were acutely aware of what they saw as the unalterable predicament in which humans find themselves. In terms of their insight they are light years ahead of the deplorable bourgeois characters populating the pages of Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls* (1842). The term "dead souls" actually applied to dead serfs, but as the novel unfolds, the term is equally applicable to the people described in the novel, who are hollow to the core and live empty, fatuous lives. The opening pages set the scene by introducing the reader to a faceless gentleman who arrives by carriage in a nondescript city simply called N: "The gentleman in the carriage was not handsome but neither was he particularly bad-looking; he was neither too fat nor too thin; he could not be said to be old, but he was not too young either."<sup>62</sup> As the story unfolds, the narrator Chichikov is caught up in the trivia, non-sequiturs, and irrelevancies of the people he meets. He has come to town with a con-man's scheme to buy up the "dead souls" who are still on the tax rolls of their owners and therefore a needless financial burden. The landowners whom Chichikov encounters are, for the most part like himself, useless individuals, leading vapid lives. Their world centers around food as they literally stuff themselves with endless meals of suckling pig with horseradish and sour cream, mushrooms, curd tarts, starlet soup, roast veal, sturgeon cheeks, fish

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60 Frederic Amory, "Rabelais' 'Hurricane Word-Formations and 'Chaotic Enumerations': Lexus and Syntax," *Études Rabelaisiennes* 17 (Geneva: Droz, 1983), 61–74.

61 Like Pascal, Huysmans retained his faith and believed in god as the ultimate source of salvation. This should be enough to exclude him from the ranks of authors I have described, who had lost any such faith. But because *À Rebours* became so popular among later Decadents and Symbolists who, while they did not possess his religious beliefs, saw Des Esseintes as one of them, I have included him.

62 Nikolai Gogol, *Dead Souls* (London: Penguin Classics, 1961), 17.

and cabbage in a frantic attempt to fill their inner void and gain some measure of substantiality.

Gogol was aware, as so many of his contemporaries were, of the stultifying effects of bourgeois social conventions. He took the idea that clothes made the man to ludicrous extremes in his wonderfully bizarre story “The Nose” (1836), in which the nose of the protagonist takes on a life of its own, dresses up in a fine uniform, and goes off the pay visits. If a nose can successfully navigate the stupidity of bourgeois conventions and the hollowness of bourgeois life, what does this say about characters like Tolstoy’s Ivan Ilyich, who spend their entire lives trying to do everything “come il faut” or “as it should be”?<sup>63</sup> Only as he is dying does Ivan Ilyich realize that his life has been a complete waste of time.

The idea that humans were born into a universe devoid of meaning or purpose was obsessively reiterated in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels, short stories, and memoirs. This theme was not new. In all periods there have been individuals who could not accept the world as they found it. This has led many people to think that boredom is an enduring aspect of human nature. This was certainly the point that Kierkegaard made in *Either/Or* (1843) when he announced, “In the beginning there was boredom” and claimed that everyday existence was as boring for the gods and Adam and Eve as it is for us.<sup>64</sup> But, Kierkegaard’s contention that boredom is a universal fact of human existence rests on the mistaken assumption that human nature is a constant and has remained unchanged over the centuries. In Lars Svendsen’s view and that of many other contemporary scholars, boredom is essentially modern.<sup>65</sup> It was the result of Romanticism gone sour and losing its faith in the ability of humans to change and “perfect” the world and themselves, as many Romantics believed they could. What was new in the early-modern and modern period is that for many no haven

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<sup>63</sup> John Stuart Mill perfectly describes the minds of people like Ivan Ilyich: “... even in what people do for pleasure, conformity is the first thing thought of; they like in crowds; they exercise choice only among things commonly done: peculiarity of taste, eccentricity of conduct, are shunned equally with crimes: until by dint of not following their own nature, they have no nature to follow: their human capacities are withered and starved: they become incapable of any strong wishes or native pleasures, and are generally without either opinions or feelings of home growth, or properly their own. Now is this, or is it not, the desirable condition of human nature?” *On Liberty*, III.6 <http://www.econlib.org/library/Mill/mlLbty3.html> (last accessed on Sept. 21, 2017).

<sup>64</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, “Crop Rotation,” *Either/Or: a Fragment of Life*, trans. Alastair Hannay (London: Penguin Books), 228.

<sup>65</sup> Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Boredom*, trans. John Irons (1999; London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2005), 12.



or refuge existed. They felt little connection to others and experienced intense feelings of disgust and boredom, in a word, *ennui*, for which there was no conceivable cure.

Charles Baudelaire's (1821–1867) prefatory poem in *Les Fleurs du mal* can be read as a manifesto of boredom, but only the special boredom that comes with modernity. The poem introduces the reader to the world of vice and error characteristic of the modernity Baudelaire explores and excoriates in subsequent poems. The description of *Ennui*, now a full-fledged character in his own right, is eerie:

He is Ennui! – His eye watery as though with tears,  
He dreams of scaffolds as he smokes his hookah pipe.  
You know him reader, that refined monster,  
– Hypocrite reader, – my fellow, – my brother!<sup>66</sup>

What is one to make of such a grotesque figure, one who smokes a pipe while teary-eyed and dreaming of the terrible punishments that occurred on scaffolds, a clear reference to the not-very-distant Reign of Terror? The hookah pipe signals the spiritual emptiness and intellectual paralysis that led so many, and this included Baudelaire, to retreat into opium. His tearful, swollen eye reflects perhaps hypocrisy or just plain despair, while the scaffold suggests the hatred of others that leads to unprovoked violence and sadism. Does this figure really represent us? And what about the “legion of demons” that carouse in our brains,” “serried, swarming, like a million maggots,” as Baudelaire claims? What, one wonders, was the source of such a despairing attitude towards life, an attitude shared by so many of Baudelaire's contemporaries?

In the first twenty pages of his *Confession of a Child of the Century* (1836), Alfred de Musset (1810–1857) gives one of the best and most succinct explanations for the malaise that affected him and his generation. As Octave, the narrator puts it: “Napoleon dead, human and divine power were reestablished in fact, but belief in them no longer existed.”<sup>67</sup> He describes his generation as not only intensely skeptical but as “morbidly sensitive” as well, attributing this to the fact that they inhabited a no-man's land between the destruction of the old world and the dawning of a new one they could not imagine:

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<sup>66</sup> Baudelaire, “To the Reader,” trans. William Aggeler, *The Flowers of Evil* (Boston: Digireads.com, 2015), 13 I have changed “Hippocritish” to “Hypocrite” in the last line.

<sup>67</sup> Alfred de Musset, *Confession of a Child of the Century*, trans. David Coward (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2012), 11.

Thus the life that was offered to the young was made up of three elements. Behind them lay a past, now destroyed and gone for ever, but still dancing on the ruins and the fossils of centuries of absolute monarchy. Before them lay the dawn of an immense horizon, the first glimmerings of the future. And between these two worlds was something resembling the Ocean which separates the old continent from young America, something vague and elusive, a heaving sea of many shipwrecks traversed at intervals by a distant white sail or a ship huffing with the heavy breath of steam, in short the present century which separates the past from the future, which is no longer the one nor yet the other but is simultaneously both; and being in it we do not know, with every step we take, if we are stepping out on the seeds of the new or the rubble of the old.<sup>68</sup>

Like his contemporaries, de Musset felt powerless in this newly emerging bourgeois world, and this sense of impotency led to unease and boredom:

And so a feeling of inexpressible unease began to ferment in those young hearts. Condemned to be docile by the kings of the world, given over to pedants of all kinds, to idleness and boredom, the young saw the foaming waves against which they had strengthened their arms ebbing away from them. In the depths of their souls, those oiled gladiators felt unbearably wretched. The richest among them turned into libertines; those possessed of modest fortunes took up professions, the law perhaps, or the army; the poorest feigned enthusiasm for causes, fell in love with big words, threw themselves into the perilous sea of action without direction ... . But ... there was not one who, when he returned home, did not feel bitterly the emptiness of his existence and the limits of his capacity to act.<sup>69</sup>

De Musset blames English and German writers, particularly Byron and Goethe, for this generational malaise:

Pardon me, great poets ... . You are demigods and I a mere child in pain. But even as I write this, I cannot help cursing you. Why did you not devote your song to the scent of flowers, the voices of nature, hope and love, the vine and sunshine, the azure firmament and beauty?<sup>70</sup>

De Musset claims that English and German ideas “sucked the liquor out of the forbidden fruit” and led those who drank it into skepticism and doubt: “The effect was a rejection of everything that exists in heaven and on earth. It could be termed disillusionment or, if you prefer, despair.” The young were blown “like motes of dust into the great abyss of universal doubt,” which led them to produce “foul and cadaverous writing.”<sup>71</sup> De Musset blames the *philosophes* for putting the ideals of liberty, fraternity, and equality into the head of the individual, while taking away the solace of religion: “Ah, you exalted men of reason who brought him to this

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<sup>68</sup> De Musset, *Confession* (see note 67), 10.

<sup>69</sup> De Musset, *Confession* (see note 67), 12–13.

<sup>70</sup> De Musset, *Confession* (see note 67), 15.

<sup>71</sup> De Musset, *Confession* (see note 67), 15–16.

point, what will you tell him if he is vanquished?”<sup>72</sup> De Musset cured himself by turning to religion, something that had become impossible for many of his contemporaries.

The void left by the death of god is a constant theme in nineteenth-century literature.<sup>73</sup> In Byron's (1788–1824) poem “Darkness” (1816), the sun goes out and the human race perishes in an immense, indifferent void. God is nowhere. For Byron, there is no heaven, no hell, no rewards, no punishments, and no divine retribution. What there is absolutely nothing, a situation that seems to suit Byron in his self-proclaimed role as the dispenser of hard-won truths. In his long poem *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874) James Thompson (1834–1882) presents a similar pessimistic image of the universe as an abysmal, dark, and unfathomable mystery beyond human comprehension:

I find no hint throughout the Universe  
Of good or ill, of blessing or of curse;  
I find alone Necessity supreme;  
With infinite Mystery, abysmal, dark,  
Unlighted even by the faintest spark  
For us the flitting shadows of a dream (XVI, 13)

Nothing wonderful is to be seen even in the starry skies for “The empyrean is a void abyss.” (XVII, 3).

Baudelaire, a keen reader of Pascal, knew all about the void. In his poem “The Abyss” he describes the fear that makes his hair stand on end when contemplating the hideous, yet fascinating, silent space in which he is suspended as in a “great hole.” There are Piranesi-like aspects to the vision he presents of “obscure horrors/ Leading nowhere” and the vertigo he feels when looking out of windows at the infinite:

Pascal had his abyss that moved along with him.  
– Alas! all is abysmal, – action, desire, dream,  
Word! and over my hair which stands on end  
I feel the wind of Fear pass frequently.  
Above, below, on every side, the depth, the strand,  
The silence, space, hideous and fascinating. ...  
On the background of my nights God with clever hands  
Sketches an unending nightmare of many forms.  
I'm afraid of sleep as one is of a great hole  
Full of obscure horrors, leading one knows not where;

<sup>72</sup> De Musset, *Confession* (see note 67), 19

<sup>73</sup> Joseph Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God* (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1965).

I see only infinity through every window,  
 And my spirit, haunted by vertigo, is jealous  
 Of the insensibility of nothingness.<sup>74</sup>

The same sense that all that exists is a vast devouring nothingness appears in Charles-Marie Leconte de Lisle's (1818–1894) poem “Midi.” What is especially interesting is that this poem begins with what seems like a bucolic appreciation of nature's beauties – waving fields of ripening grain, white oxen resting on green hills – only to end by advising those passing by to flee “for nature is a void and the sun devouring./ Nothing lives here, nothing is sad or gay.” All there is is “the heavenly void.” Matthew Arnold's (1822–1888) “Dover Beach” (1867) exhibits the same abrupt turn from what seems like a rapturous appreciation of the world's beauty to disillusionment:

Ah, love, let us be true  
 To one another! for the world, which seems  
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
 So various, so beautiful, so new,  
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
 And we are here as on a darkling plain  
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Arnold attributes this state of desolation to the loss of faith: “The Sea of Faith / Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore / Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled. / But now I only hear / Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar. ...”

Arnold provides an interesting case because while he felt keenly the alienation and despair of many of his fellow artists and expresses it in “Dover Beach,” he drew a line at what he believed he could write for the public at large. When he published his collected poems in 1853, he deliberately left out one of the best, “Empedocles on Etna,” published anonymously the previous year. In the introduction to the collection he explains that he did not include this poem because it offered no way out, no solution to the despair that caused Empedocles to commit suicide by leaping into the fiery volcano. Certain situations simply could not give a reader anything but pain and therefore should not be published. These situations occurred when “... the suffering finds no vent in action; in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done.” In “Dover Beach”

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74 Charles Baudelaire, “The Abyss,” *The Flowers of Evil*, trans. William Aggeler <http://fleursdumal.org/poem/319> (last accessed on Sept. 21, 2017).

there is the suggestion that the lovers might find comfort in each other, but in “Empedocles on Etna,” no solace of any kind is offered. Before taking his final leap, Empedocles declares,

For something has impair'd thy spirit's strength,  
And dried its self-sufficing fount of joy.  
Thou canst not live with men nor with thyself.<sup>75</sup>

Arnold recognized that he had hit bottom with this post-sublime poem.

As we have seen, alienation from the universe went hand-in-hand with alienation from one's fellow humans.<sup>76</sup> This was a particular problem for urban dwellers like de Maistre and Obermann. Thomas de Quincey (1785–1859) provides a similar example of an alienated city dweller. Like his predecessors, he professes to love humanity, but in reality he was terrified of the sea of faces he observed on his walks through London. His inability to empathize with the men and women scurrying past him are indicative of his isolation. Everything is out of proportion in this Piranesi-like landscape with its mobs of phantom figures, much like the “throng” of people described by Obermann and the fantastic spirits in Beckford's *Vathek*:

No loneliness can be like that which weighs upon the heart in the centre of faces never ending, without voice or utterance for him; yet innumerable, that have “no speculation” in their orbs which he can understand; and hurrying figures of men and women weaving to and fro, with no apparent purposes intelligible to a stranger, seeming like a mask of maniacs, or, oftentimes, like a pageant of phantoms. The great length of the streets in many quarters of London; the continual opening of transient glimpses into other vistas equally far stretching, going off at right angles to the one which you are traversing; and the murky atmosphere which, settling upon the remoter end of every long avenue, wraps its termination in gloom and uncertainty, – all these are circumstances aiding that sense of vastness and illimitable proportions which forever brood over the aspect of London in its interior.<sup>77</sup>

The sympathy de Quincey initially professes for the working class gives way to sheer horror; he is obsessed by the fear he will be engulfed and murdered by a mob of what he calls “Jacobins.” De Quincey was an eight-year-old child when the French Terror began, and his fear of Jacobins arose from what he saw and heard at that young age about the atrocities committed in the name of liberty, equality, and

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<sup>75</sup> Matthew Arnold, “Empedocles on Etna,” Act II, lines 2024. [https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/ttu-ir/bitstream/handle/2346/47257/ttu\\_mac001\\_000029.pdf?sequence=1](https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/ttu-ir/bitstream/handle/2346/47257/ttu_mac001_000029.pdf?sequence=1) (last accessed on Sept. 21, 2017).

<sup>76</sup> This is a major theme in Chris Baldrick's insightful book *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-century Writing* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

<sup>77</sup> Cited in Adams, *Nil* (see note 30), 36–37.

fraternity. In addition, his opium addiction contributed to what Alethea Hayter has described as the urban nightmares of addicts.<sup>78</sup> But neither his childhood experiences nor his addiction fully explain his alienation. In fact, his opium addiction was, in all probability, the consequence of his childhood and adult experiences.<sup>79</sup>

A better explanation for de Quincey's aversion to crowds comes from the German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858–1918) in his analysis of metropolitan life. Simmel claims that reserve and blaséness characterize the response of urban dwellers to others, and this response implicitly involves antipathy as a mode of self-assertion and self-preservation.<sup>80</sup> To attempt to sympathize with each individual in a crowded urban landscape would lead to a mental breakdown: "If the unceasing external contact of numbers of persons in the city should be met by the same number of inner reactions as in the small town, in which he has a positive relationship, one would be completely atomized internally and would fall into an unthinkable mental condition."<sup>81</sup> But it also must be pointed out that as much as those suffering from ennui decried aspects of urban life, it was still infinitely preferable to the bourgeois provincialism they excoriated. Baudelaire, for example, characterized the countryside as "the breeding ground of blockheads, the most stupid of milieus, the most productive of absurdities, the most abundant in intolerant imbeciles."<sup>82</sup>

As we have seen, the theme of entrapment is a common feature in the writings of those suffering from ennui. De Quincey is no exception. In his insightful

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**78** Hayter describes the waking visions, dreams, and nightmares of opium addicts as follows: they include being tortured by reptiles and insects, embraced by coiling snakes, crawled on by worms, ants, and microbes. They are thrown over cliffs by fiery dragons or tortoises. Dead and decaying things surround them. Their children turn into skeletons. Wandering through huge caves, they step on rotting corpses. Faces watching them are everywhere, laughing with piercing eyes. Voices whisper, threaten, and plot against the addict. He is shot at, beaten, sawn asunder, drowned. His identity disintegrates, his head is hollow. He is merged with the character in a book or the furniture in a room. Inanimate things come alive with vibrating force. Clothes, bed sheets turn into fantastic and threatening animals. *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 56.

**79** John Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychology of Imperialism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 3–4.

**80** Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," *Georg Simmel On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine. The Heritage of Sociology (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 329.

**81** Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (see note 80), 331.

**82** Cited in Grăna, *Modernity and its Discontents* (see note 21), 91. As Marshall Berman says of Baudelaire, the city flâneur: Baudelaire "may feel like an alien in the universe, but he is at home as a man and a citizen in the Paris streets." Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (1982; London: Penguin Books, 1988), 229.

article on De Quincey and Piranesi's prisons, Perry Curtis emphasizes how often the terrifying image of an individual trapped within a huge and labyrinthine structure and unable to escape appears in short stories, essays, and novels of the period.<sup>83</sup> "In the Pains of Opium," de Quincey specifically compares his dreams to Piranesi's engravings of a "Gothic hall." In his later autobiographical and fictional writings people find themselves trapped within vast gothic buildings, searching for keys that will allow them to escape.<sup>84</sup> His short story "The Household Wreck," one of the three pieces of fiction he published, opens with an allegorical lament on human frailty that immediately brings Piranesi's etchings to mind: "... in the vast halls of man's frailty there are separate and more gloomy chambers of a frailty more exquisite and consummate."<sup>85</sup> Much of the tale takes place in the "vast halls" and "gloomy chambers" of the prison in which the protagonist has been wrongfully incarcerated. The story ends with his wife successfully helping him escape, but only after many pages describing the couple futilely searching for a way out as they pass through immense corridors and rooms. The image of maze-like halls appears again in "Dreaming," the introduction to the final version of De Quincey's *Supra de Profundis*, but here the attempt to escape is unsuccessful as De Quincey ruefully admits his inability to give up opium:

I had not reversed my motions for many weeks before I became profoundly aware that this was impossible. Or, in the imagery of my dreams, which translated everything into their own language, I saw, through vast avenues of gloom, those towering gates of ingress which hitherto had always seemed to stand open now at last barred against my retreat, and hung with funeral crape.<sup>86</sup>

The menacing Piranesi-like world in which so many late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers found themselves, was, as we have seen, likened repeatedly to a vast void, a vortex, or what we might today call a black hole. We are trapped, and however frantically we search for some exit, some key to deliver us, our fate is sealed, and we are doomed. But what exactly is this black hole except the womb, which is also the tomb, from which we emerge and to which we return? Adams makes this point when analyzing Zola's *Germinal*, a novel in which Adams sees nothing at play but the blind, brutal fact of fertility, that "yawning, insatiable force, in which all

<sup>83</sup> Perry Curtis, "Piranesi's Prisons: Thomas De Quincey and the Failure of Autobiography," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 33.4 (Autumn, 1993): 809–24, here 822.

<sup>84</sup> Curtis, "Piranesi's Prisons" (see note 83), 813.

<sup>85</sup> Thomas De Quincey, "The Household Wreck," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 43 (January, 1838), 1. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015028027939;view=1up;seq=1>, 1 (last accessed on Sept. 24, 2017).

<sup>86</sup> Thomas De Quincey, "Suspiria de Profundis." *Confessions of an Opium-Eater and Other Writings*, ed. Robert Morrison. Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 84.

men's intentions, ideas, and identities are lost."<sup>87</sup> All efforts to rationalize human relations come to ruin in the face of this reality. The men who think enough to protest are maimed or killed, and the reader is left with "an image of fecund, indifferent, exhausted earth spawning forever Jeanlins and Bonnemorts ... [F]or Zola the irrelevant process is nothing less than life itself, the roar of generation ... the cycles of filth, misery, growth, corruption."<sup>88</sup> Adams makes the same point in his analysis of Zola's *Nana*. Nana, the voracious female, is nature writ large, and she destroys the men she attracts with utter indifference. As one of the characters in the novel comments, Nana's "tool," by which he means her vagina, is mightier than any "machines invented by engineers."<sup>89</sup> In these novels "woman has become "a Moloch, a Juggernaut," "a deadly disease." "She is a sacred, fatal invalid, whether frigid or rotten, and her fascination lies in the assurance of doom which she provides."<sup>90</sup>

Xavier de Maistre viewed women in much the same light a century earlier. He has a portrait of his former beloved in his room. When his manservant remarks that the eyes of the woman follow him around whenever he is cleaning or making the bed, de Maistre's thoughts turn to the dismal fate of all lovers separated from their mistresses:

Poor lover! While you languish far from your mistress, in whose heart you have perhaps already been replaced – while you gaze avidly upon her portrait and imagine yourself ... to be alone in receiving a return glance, that perfidious effigy, as unfaithful as the original, casts her eyes upon all that surrounds and smiles at everyone.<sup>91</sup>

This is exactly how Édouard Manet painted Nana in 1877. She stands in her underclothes looking out of the picture directly at the viewer. One hardly notices, and Nana certainly does not, the impatient gentleman sitting on a sofa behind her.

Femmes fatales like Nana abound in nineteenth-century literature and art. They seduce and destroy men, dragging them down from Olympian heights into the realm of animal bestiality. Prosper Mérimée's (1803–1870) "La Vénus d'Ille" (1837) centers on the statue of a black, sinister Venus, the most ancient of femme fatales, who embodies eros in its violent, cruel, diabolical, and all-consuming form, causing death and disaster. The narrator in this tale is a well-educated archeologist who tries to give a valid and rational explanation for the apparent

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<sup>87</sup> Adams, *Nil* (see note 30), 185.

<sup>88</sup> Adams, *Nil* (see note 30), 186.

<sup>89</sup> Adams, *Nil* (see note 30), 188.

<sup>90</sup> Adams, *Nil* (see note 30), 190.

<sup>91</sup> De Maistre, *Voyage* (see note 37), 24. Manet painted this portrait after he had read Zola's *L'Assommoir*, in which Nana played a minor role. It was Manet's portrait that made Zola devote an entire novel to her.



supernatural powers possessed by the statue; but none of these explanations are sufficient because Venus embodies an irrational and destructive force that human reason simply cannot comprehend or defy. This dark vision of female sexuality also appears in Mérimée's masterpiece *Carmen*.<sup>92</sup>

This view of the perfidious, voracious, cannibalistic female was the flipside of the ideology of "The Angel in the House," which came to the fore at the end of the eighteenth century and seemed to reign supreme during the nineteenth.<sup>93</sup> I say, "seemed" because although lip service was paid to women as paragons of virtue, they were more often despised for their moral and intellectual weakness and sexual rapacity.<sup>94</sup> The image of the pure, asexual angel in the house, who closed her eyes, lay back, and thought of god and country when called upon to fulfill her reproductive duty, appears in stark contrast to the images of deranged, dangerous, and predatory women who populate the landscape of nineteenth-century art and inhabited the subterranean regions of many a male subconscious. It is as if women were divided into two distinct categories: good, nurturing, gentle, passive, sexless, selfless wives and mothers and evil, violent, hysterical, egomaniacal temptresses who literally drain men of their vital seminal juices through their excessive sexual demands. One must remember that a common euphemism for male ejaculation during the nineteenth century was "to spend." Women were the ultimate consumers, not just of goods, but of men and all the things that men stood for. "No century," claims Peter Gay, "depicted woman as vampire, as castrator, as killer, so consistently, so programmatically, and so nakedly as the

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**92** Mérimée's story is included in Joan C. Kessler, *Demons of the Night: Tales of the Fantastic, Madness, and the Supernatural from Nineteenth-Century France* (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 1995), 63–90.

**93** In addition to the idea of "The Angel in the House," a positive view of women appeared in the theme of "The Eternal Feminine" or "Realm of the Mothers" made famous by Goethe in part 2 of *Faust*. Faust discovers the existence of this realm in which powerful goddesses reign and there is neither space nor time. In this realm, everything exists forever with undiminished vitality. See Elena P. O'Brien, "The Meaning of the Eternal Feminine in Goethe's Drama Faust," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Modern Language and Linguistics, Florida State University, 2012. For a less than positive view of "The Angel in the House," see Charles Baudelaire, "Portrait of Some Mistresses," *Paris Spleen*, trans. Louise Varèse (1947; New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1970), 88–89, which describes the murder of one "Angel" precisely because she was so angelic.

**94** Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de Siècle Culture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). See also id., *Evil Sisters: The Threat of Female Sexuality and the Cult of Manhood* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996); Joseph A. Kestner, *Mythology and Misogyny: The Social Discourse of Nineteenth-Century British Classical-Subject Painting* (Madison, WI: the University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

nineteenth.”<sup>95</sup> In this regard the dichotomy between the good wife and the rapacious, evil temptress was not as clear-cut as one might imagine. For a great many men the idealization of women was a cover, a ploy, a prophylactic, so to speak, to hide their real belief that women were the implacable enemy inhibiting male transcendence. It was precisely because of their nature and because they followed their nature that women dragged men down from the Olympian heights, where many wished to reside. In his book on evolution, Joseph Le Conte (1823–1901) recognized the existence of a divided male self, but he was one of many who believed that man’s role in life is to transcend the base part of his nature; since nature and womanhood were one and the same, this entailed staying clear of women:

[man] is possessed of two natures – a lower in common with animals, and a higher, peculiar to himself. The whole mission and life-work of man is the progressive and finally the complete dominance, both in the individual and in the race, of the higher over the lower. The whole meaning of sin is the humiliating bondage of the higher over the lower. As the *material* evolution of Nature found its goal, its completion, and its significance in man, so must man enter immediately upon a higher *spiritual* evolution to find its goal and completion and its significance in the ideal man – the divine man.<sup>96</sup>

Perhaps Le Conte’s language is a bit more theatrical and overblown, but are his views really that different from what Freud says about women in *Civilization and its Discontents*? In this work Freud argues that women are the natural enemies of civilization, and since civilization is the work of men, they are natural-born enemies of men. Women cannot transcend their own subjective and familial interests. They can never reach the heights of objectivity and idealism attained by males. They therefore soon come into opposition to civilization and display their retarding and restraining influence:

Women represent the interests of the family and of sexual life. The work of civilization has become increasingly the business of men, it confronts them with ever more difficult tasks and compels them to carry out instinctual sublimation’s of which women are little capable. Since a man does not have unlimited quantities of psychical energy at his disposal, he has to accomplish his tasks by making an expedient distribution of his libido. What he employs for cultural aims he to a great extent withdraws from women and sexual life. His constant association with men, and his dependence on his relations with them, ever estrange him

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<sup>95</sup> Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*. Vol. 1: *Education of the Senses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 207.

<sup>96</sup> Joseph LeConte, *Evolution: Its Nature, Its Evidence, and Its Relation to Religious Thought*. 2nd rev. ed. (New York: D. Appleton, 1897), 330.

from his duties as a husband and father. Thus the woman finds herself forced into the background by the claims of civilization and she adopts a hostile attitude towards it.<sup>97</sup>

In this diagnosis, woman's physical nature is the reason for her deficiencies. It is precisely motherhood that makes women the threatening creatures they are. For if woman is the womb writ large, she is troublesome indeed.

Given the view of many late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers, artists, and intellectuals that we are helplessly entrapped in a universe void of meaning or purpose, it is understandable that the loss of rational control and the disintegration of the self became popular topics of reflection. The earliest use of the word "sub-conscious" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from De Quincey.<sup>98</sup> But, as we have seen, the idea that there was some kind of alien double within the human mind or psyche comes out clearly in de Maistre's discussion of "the beast within" and goes back to St. Paul's notion of his divided self. But in St. Paul, this division was the product of a moral crisis and could be cured by repentance and conversion and the divine assistance that came with both. This was not the case for De Quincey, de Maistre, and other sufferers from ennui, who felt completely alone in a hostile, godless world. If there was to be any help, it had to come from the individual himself, and the deck was stacked against him.

Maggie Kilgour argues it is no wonder that Gothic novels and the psychological investigation of the individual consciousness – what later became psychoanalysis – began to take shape around the end of the eighteenth century since gothic novels both uncover the limits of rationality and the limits of enlightenment ideas of progress.<sup>99</sup> Gothic novels reflected in a more intense way the doubts about the scope of rationality and the existence of a stable, consistent individual self that had emerged at the end of the seventeenth-century with the sensualist philosophy of John Locke.<sup>100</sup> The long eighteenth-century (1650–1800) has been characterized as an age of dissembling, of masks and mistaken identities,

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<sup>97</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929/30). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–1974), 21:50–51.

<sup>98</sup> On the ways De Quincey anticipates Freud, see Charles Proudfit, "Thomas De Quincey and Sigmund Freud: Sons, Fathers, Dreamers – Precursors of Psychoanalytic Developmental Psychology," *Thomas De Quincey: Bicentenary Studies*, ed. Robert Lance Snyder (Norman, OK and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 88–107.

<sup>99</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 13–14.

<sup>100</sup> The realization that the powers of the rational mind were limited helps to explain the innumerable eighteenth- and nineteenth-century movements, schemes, and programs to strengthen the mind and ensure its power to control events which can be found in Mesmerism, Galvanism, Thought-transfer, Christian Science, Spiritualism, and Theosophy. Cf. J. W. Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason: European Thought, 1848–1914* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000);

of *trompe l'oeil* and theatricality, in which things and, more importantly, people were quite literally seldom what they seemed.<sup>101</sup> As Jack Lynch has pointed out, eighteenth-century Britons were convinced that their age was unprecedented in terms of deception, which explains why adjectives like “authentic,” “genuine,” and “real” proliferated in book titles.<sup>102</sup> This concern with deception and inauthenticity, however, was not limited to Britain but extended across Europe, Russia, and the United States. One of its earliest manifestations appears in Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* with the unsettling issue of Don Quixote’s identity, not to mention the identities of other characters in the novel. Not only is the “real” identity of Don Quixote in doubt, but the reader finds himself questioning the identity and veracity of the author as well. Who exactly is this Cid Hamete Benegeli, who claims to have written the novel to disabuse readers of chivalric nonsense? How reliable is he as a narrator? And what about the reliability of the text itself?

By raising the issue of identity Cervantes was implicitly bringing up questions that had become both problematic and extremely dangerous from the Reformation onwards. The determination of who was and who was not an authentic Christian was a key concern in Spain at the time Cervantes wrote as the Inquisition ratcheted up its attempts to extirpate heretics, particularly Marranos. The issue of identity was of equal concern throughout Europe as national churches tried to ferret out, expel, or otherwise criminalize and marginalize dissenters. Personal identity was therefore a matter of great public and private concern, but in areas where individuals had been forced to convert from one religion to another and even back again, religious identities became increasingly porous and fragile.<sup>103</sup>

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John S. Haller, Jr., *The History of New Thought: From Mind Cure to Positive Thinking and the Prosperity Gospel* (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation Press, 2012).

**101** See their “Introduction: Toward a Natural History of Mind and Body,” *The Languages of Psyche*, ed. George S. Rousseau (see note 24), 39–40.

**102** Jack Lynch, *Deception and Detection in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 2. See also Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imagining the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1991), Chapter 1, especially 84–120.

**103** It was also during this period that the so-called “Battle between the Ancients and the Moderns” occurred, a battle in which the scholarly “moderns” poured over supposedly ancient texts from the Bible to Ossian, impugning their authorship and authenticity. Ian Haywood, *Faking It: Art and the Politics of Forgery* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1987); id., *The Making of History: A Study of the Literary Forgeries of James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Ideas of History and Fiction* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986). Disrupting the conventions of narrative order and questioning the veracity and even the identity of narrators and editors occurs in a number of eighteenth-century novels. For example, Henry Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling* (1771) begins with chapter XI and contains missing chapters, editorial insertions, and ellipses, all of which bring into question the reliability of the text. Henry

Cervantes' hero came to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English and continental readers through the prism of seventeenth-century natural philosophy, epistemology, and psychology, which added further elements of uncertainty to the already tortured issue of distinguishing truth from falsehood and reality from illusion, especially when it came to the dilemmas surrounding individual identity. Neither Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* nor Locke's *Essay of Human Understanding* (1694) solved the problems raised by Cervantes; for if mind and matter had nothing whatsoever in common, as Descartes seemed to contend, and if the mind was a "blank slate" with no inherent stock of innate ideas, as Locke maintained, how could human beings know anything, much less their own identities?<sup>104</sup> As Locke's critics claimed, if the self is actually a blank slate when an individual is born and only formed by subsequent experiences, it is at all times threatened with dissolution because there was nothing to tie these experiences together and consequently no basis for establishing the continuity of the self. There is, in other words, no transcendental subject. Aristotle's form had provided the foundation for a stable identity. Existence is a predicate of being for both Aristotle and Descartes, but not for Locke. The self is basically a collection of memories with no essential unity. Locke's emphasis on education demonstrated

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Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, ed. Brian Vickers. Oxford World's Classics (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

**104** For the limits of Descartes' "cogito" for postulating an autonomous self, see Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 55–74. See also Hiram Caton, *The Origin of Subjectivity. An Essay on Descartes* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973). On the dissolution of the ego, see Ernst Lee Tuveson, *The Imagination as a Means of Grace: Locke and the Aesthetics of Romanticism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960). Locke's famous pupil Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, described to his protégé, Michael Ainsworth, the effect Locke's idea of the understanding had on him: "'Twas Mr. Lock that struck at all Fundamentals, threw all *Order* and *Virtue* out of the World, and made the Very Ideas of these (which are the same as the idea of GOD) *unnatural* and without foundations in our Minds'" (*Several Letters Written by a Noble Lord to a Young Man at the University* [London: Printed for J. Robert, 1717], 39). Lord Shaftesbury turned to the idea that humans had an innate sensibility or moral sense that led them to act virtuously. Locke himself recognized that without some innate sense of morality, human reason might be too weak to act morally. In a letter of 1659 he describes human passions as our "bruiteish part" in a way that anticipates the divided selves described by de Maistre and many other later writers: "Tis our passions and bruiteish part that dispose of our thoughts and actions, we are all Centaurs and tis the beast that carry us ... ." Cited in John Dunn, *Wealth and Virtue in Shaping the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 124. Locke wrote this at the end of the Civil War period. In later years, Locke became less pessimistic and believed that human reason could overcome our "bruiteish part." See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Niddich (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1975) I, 6:46.

that the self could be formed by society. This line of thinking was carried on by Rousseau and the French ideologues right up to the father of Sociology Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), who emphasized society’s role in creating the individual, an idea that has gained purchase and expanded ever since with the development of the theory of social constructionism.<sup>105</sup>

The idea that human beings had an essence or essential nature, an idea that provided the basis for enlightenment ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, virtually disappears in the nineteenth century as Social Darwinist claims about the innate differences between races proliferated. While in earlier periods, the notions of god, nature, and man were static, they become increasingly fluid and in many instances problematic from the early-modern period onwards. Hegel, for example, emphasizes that everything has to be understood concretely and in its particularity in terms of what it “becomes.” Here “essence” gives way to “process.” The same thing happens with the concepts of god and nature; instead of having distinct essences, both become “problems,” along with human beings. Naturally, older ideas about an essential self, an essential god, and an essential nature continued to exist as a kind of cultural inertia, but for many thoughtful individuals the rationale for essentialist definitions of any kind had been destroyed. The illegibility of things and persons is thus a fundamental theme in many of the writers we have discussed so far, but it was perhaps never set out more clearly before Kafka than in Herman Melville’s (1819–1891) *Moby Dick* (1851). For all its length, we never get a clear picture of whether Captain Ahab is a maniac, as Ishmael repeatedly says he is, or a visionary, as Ishmael also claims. We are never sure whether the whale is simply a dumb animal or an agent of some malevolent power satanically worshipped by Ahab. That such questions are raised but never satisfactorily answered highlights the fact that however much the rational mind grasps at truth, reality eludes it. We are indeed trapped in Piranesi’s Gothic halls with no clear exit.

The fragmentary, inconsistent nature of an individual’s personality emerged as a real dilemma during the long eighteenth century when what historians describe as “the enterprise society” arose, allowing individuals an increasing role in shaping their status and identities. “The enterprise society” developed in conjunction with “possessive individualism.” Historians disagree about exactly when possessive individualism emerged, but they agree that it was based on the idea that the individual was the proprietor of his own person,

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**105** Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

free from dependence on others and owing little or nothing to society.<sup>106</sup> The organic model of the body politic was replaced by a contractual one predicated on the idea that an individual had the duty and right to freely follow his own self-interest. The notion that individuals were free to determine their own identity only heightened awareness of the fragility of any sort of stable selfhood. Terry Castle goes so far as to claim that “eighteenth-century culture as a whole might ... be termed, without exaggeration, a culture of travesty” and that “eighteenth-century English society was ... a world of masqueraders and artificers, self alienation and phantasmogoria,” a view seconded by many living at the time, and not just in England.<sup>107</sup> The theater provided an apt example of how easy it was to slip from one part to another, which was one of the major reasons why seventeenth-century Puritans banned it in England.<sup>108</sup> In Beaumarchais’ *The Marriage of Figaro* (1784), the protagonist soliloquizes about the instability of his own self:

... nor do I know who this I may be with which *I* am so concerned – it’s first a shapeless collection of unknown parts, then a helpless puny thing, then a lively little animal, then a young man thirsting for pleasure, with a full capacity to enjoy and ready to use any shifts to live – master here and valet there, at the whim of fortune; ambitious from vanity, industrious from need – and lazy ... with delight! An orator in tight spots, a poet for relaxation, a musician from time to time, a lover in hot fits: I have seen everything, done everything, worn out everything.<sup>109</sup>

De Maistre describes himself just as Figaro does, as a “... variable and discordant assortment of sensations and perceptions that make up my existence.”<sup>110</sup> While reading over some of his old letters he comments on the fickle nature of human beings and human experience: “... how my ideas have changed, and my feelings too! How different my friends are, when I look at them then and now! I see them madly driven by schemes that no longer move them at all!”<sup>111</sup>

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**106** C. P. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism; Hobbes to Locke* (1962; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

**107** Terry Castle, “The Culture of Travesty: Sexuality and Masquerade in Eighteenth-Century England,” *British Literature, 1640–1789: A Critical Reader*, ed. Robert Demaria, Jr. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 251–70, here 251. See also her book *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

**108** Laura Levine, “Men in Women’s Clothing: Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization from 1579–1642,” *Criticism* 28 (Spring 1986): 121–43.

**109** *Literature of the Western World*, Volume II: *Neoclassicism Through the Modern Period*, ed. Brian Wilkie and James Hurt (New York: Prentice Hall, 2000), 466.

**110** De Maistre, *Voyage* (see note 37), 61.

**111** De Maistre, *Voyage* (see note 37), 52–53.

In this new, modern world, the self had become porous with the result that distinguishing oneself from others became increasingly problematic but at the same time increasingly necessary as colonialism and imperialism brought strangers into ever-closer proximity. The idea of a porous self was particularly troubling to De Quincey because it invoked ideas of contagion and infection from dangerous external sources, be they members of the English lower classes or foreign subjects invading the mental and physical landscape of their colonizers. The distinction between “us” and “them” provides the theme in De Quincey’s “The English Mail-Coach.” In this story we see De Quincey’s fear of the lower classes, the Jacobins as he called them. But we also see this fear displaced on to “oriental others,” who populate the menacing dreams and visions described in the story as well as in other of De Quincey’s writings.<sup>112</sup> In his psychological study of De Quincey, John Barrall speaks of the “oriental soup” of images and stories circulating in Britain at the time in newspapers, exhibitions, melodramas, pantomimes, engravings, plays, and images, all of which shaped De Quincey’s paranoid fear of the East.<sup>113</sup> De Quincey feels he is infected by an alien nature he cannot escape. In his dreams he finds “housed within himself ... some horrid alien nature,” similar to de Maistre’s inner beast, which had the power to multiply, take over, and corrupt what he once thought of as the inviolable sanctuary of his inner self.<sup>114</sup>

The idea that there was something terribly wrong with human nature and virtually impossible to curb or change lies at the root of de Maistre’s and De Quincey’s sense of their divided selves. This is a constant theme in Poe’s stories as well. Poe’s heroes and victims try to understand, analyze, explain, and control what is happening to them, but their attempts are futile. We can see this in the

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**112** De Quincey’s horror of the East comes out in *Confessions of an Opium Eater* in a passage dated May, 1818. His fear of infection from the East appears in such phrases as: “oriental leprosy,” “oriental cholera,” “oriental typhus fever,” the “plague of Cairo,” the “cancerous kisses” of Egyptian crocodiles. De Quincey’s ambiguous view of inoculation came from the fact that it originated in Turkey. For an insightful discussion of De Quincey’s fear of infection, see John Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey* (see note 79), 16–17. Editor’s note: For a contrastive perspective predicated on the sense of transculturality derived from linguistic research, see the contribution to this volume by Aaron French.

**113** As Barrell points out, by displacing class conflict onto an orientalist other, the ruling classes managed to make a show of the limited class solidarity needed to keep the imperialist bandwagon moving forward. While acknowledging the differences between classes at home, imperialists could simultaneously trivialize these differences by emphasizing that all classes shared a similar civilization in contrast to the inferior, barbarous civilization of the colonized other (*The Infection of Thomas De Quincey* [see note 79], 11).

**114** Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey* (see note 79), 18.



case of Egaeus, the narrator in Poe's short story "Berenice." Egaeus could not be more different from his cousin Berenice. While he, like so many of those suffering from ennui, is ill, withdrawn, gloomy, and incapable of empathy, much less love, Bernice is young, beautiful, exuberant, and deeply in love with Egaeus. All this changes in an instant when Berenice falls fatally ill. Her appearance and personality are totally transformed by "her fallen and desolate condition."<sup>115</sup> Egaeus suffers from his own disease, a kind of monomaniacal attention to the most ordinary object or detail. For reasons that only make sense in a Poe story, Egaeus, who had not loved Berenice when she was young and beautiful, asks her to marry him in her melancholy, livid state, which he admits makes him shudder in her presence. As the nuptials approach, Berenice stands before Egaeus, and when he looks at her pale, emaciated body and face, she smiles, and he sees her teeth, commenting, "Would to God that I had never beheld them, or that, having done so, I had died!"<sup>116</sup> He becomes fixated on Berenice's teeth:

... the teeth! – the teeth! – they were here and there, and everywhere, and visibly and palpably before me, long, narrow, and excessively white, with the pale lips writhing about them, as in the very moment of their first terrible development. ... I coveted them so madly! I felt that their possession could alone ever restore me to peace, in giving me back my reason.<sup>117</sup>

Shortly after this hysterical confession, Berenice dies. The story ends with Egaeus crazed and unable to remember that he had literally dug up Berenice's body and extracted her teeth until his manservant enters his study and points to his muddy garments and the spade leaning against the wall. At this moment, Egaeus picks up a box on the library table, and when it falls to the floor "there rolled out some instruments of dental surgery, intermingled with thirty-two small, white, and ivory-looking substances that were scattered to and fro about the floor."<sup>118</sup> Egaeus was clearly unable to control the id-like urges that drove him to commit such a harrowing deed. And what were these urges but a disguised compulsion to confront and destroy what he would have faced had Berenice lived long enough to marry him, the dreaded, castrating *vagina dentata* (or toothy vagina).<sup>119</sup> This brings us to the theme of the vampire, so prevalent in fiction from the mid-eighteenth century on. Vampires are, of course, noted for their sharp, pointed, and

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<sup>115</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *The Complete Tales of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 2010) 585.

<sup>116</sup> *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (see note 115), 584.

<sup>117</sup> *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (see note 115), 585.

<sup>118</sup> *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (see note 115), 586.

<sup>119</sup> Marie Bonaparte, *The Life and Works of Edgar Allen Poe: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation* (London, 1949), 209–10.

very white teeth. The connection between vampirism, sexuality, misogyny, and ennui needs to be explored.

The fact that the vampire myth came into prominence at this point in time and was not as ancient and widespread as Montague Summers claimed provides further evidence that writers recognized the complexity and fragility of the human personality long before the science of psychiatry was invented.<sup>120</sup> While there were plenty of people who believed in the reality of vampires, the more educated recognized that the vampire lay within and was largely a function of human greed exacerbated by the capitalist drive to colonize and exploit at home and abroad.<sup>121</sup> Karl Marx described capital as a vampire: “Capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives on by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.”<sup>122</sup> The image of the vampire, like the cannibal, another prevalent literary trope of the period, was, however, multifaceted.<sup>123</sup> While it most certainly symbolized commercial corruption and venal business practices, it was also a metaphor for autocratic government and tyrannical taxation. The economic and political dimensions of vampirism were further and inextricably connected with European and especially British anxieties about imperialism and reverse colonization. This was summed up in the idea of the vampire as a kind of contagion coming from the East, a contagion that had clear sexual and as well as racial implications. This constellation of meanings is apparent in Bram Stoker *Dracula* (1897).

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**120** Among Montagu Summers’ many book on vampires, see *The Vampire: Kith and Kin* (1928); *The Vampire in Europe* (1939).

**121** The most well-known scholarly work on vampires in the eighteenth century was that of the French Benedictine monk and biblical scholar, Dom Augustin Calamet (1672–1757), whose dissertation upon *The Apparitions of Angels, Daemons, and Ghosts, And concerning the Vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia* (French 1746; English 1759) was approved by the Sorbonne and the Benedictine order. Voltaire was aghast at Calmet’s work and the fact that it was supported by the Catholic Church and the Sorbonne. See the article on vampires in Voltaire’s *Philosophical Dictionary*. According to Horace Walpole, no less a person that George II believed in vampires. See, Ernest R. Henderson, ed., *Side Lights in English History: Being Extracts from Letters, Papers, and Diaries of the Past Three Centuries* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1900), 244.

**122** Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1 (1867), trans. Ben Fowkes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 342. See Mark Neocleous, “The Political Economy of the Dead: Marx’s Vampires.” <http://gretl.ecn.wfu.edu/~cottrell/OPE/archive/0604/att-0138/01-PoliticalEconOfTheDead.pdf> (last accessed on Sept. 21, 2017).

**123** Chris Baldick, *In Frankenstein’s Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity and Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1987). The theme of cannibalism had preceded that of the vampire, but the two merged in the mid-eighteenth century.

Dracula's Transylvanian origins and his travel westward to London reflected the "Eastern Question" that obsessed British foreign policy in the 1880s and 90s.<sup>124</sup> According to Professor Van Helsing, the older Dutch scientist in the novel, whose English is idiosyncratic to say the least, the vampire is the product of invasion: "He have follow the wake of the berserker Icclander, the devil-begotten Hun, the Slave, the Saxon, the Magyar."<sup>125</sup> Van Helsing further claims that vampires are the consequence of imperial decay and racial enervation. As we have seen, the fear of contagion coming from the East and infecting Britain haunted De Quincey, and the idea of racial degeneration preoccupied Europeans as a whole.<sup>126</sup> Jonathan Harker, the principal protagonist in the novel, agonizes over his role in bringing Dracula into the heart of the British Empire because of the effects this might have on future generations of Englishmen:

This was the being I was helping to transfer to London where perhaps for centuries to come, he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever widening circle of semi-darkness to batten on the helpless.<sup>127</sup>

Harker's anguish sums up British fears of reverse colonization. The idea of Dracula spreading his poison combines political and biological metaphors, suggesting the idea of pollution, infection, as well as invasion. Dracula threatens both the nation's and the individual's integrity and autonomy. He appropriates and transforms bodies. By taking people's blood, he deracinates them since blood is a sign of racial identity, and the vampire infects people with his blood while ingesting theirs. Although it is never made absolutely clear that Harker was among those ravished by Dracula, as the novel unfolds Harker becomes weak and pale and his hair turns white. Dracula's hair, on the contrary, grows progressively darker, and he becomes more vigorous because he has feasted on English blood. Dracula is potent and virile and able to produce innumerable offspring unlike Harker, who marries Mina Murray when he is still bedridden and recovering from the nervous breakdown precipitated by his trip to Transylvania to help Dracula finalize a real estate transaction for property in London.<sup>128</sup>

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**124** Stephen D. Arata, "The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization," *Victorian Studies* (Summer 1990): 627–34.

**125** Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, ed. Nina Auerbach and David J. Skral. A Norton Critical Edition (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 211.

**126** Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (1892; Lincoln, NE: the University of Nebraska Press, 1993); Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848–1918* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

**127** Stoker, *Dracula* (see note 125), 53–54.

**128** Arata, "The Occidental Tourist" (see note 124), 467–68.

But for all the talk of Dracula as an external threat, the horrid truth is that Dracula lodges within us. This is established by the fact that Stoker repeatedly mentions Dracula's inability to gain entrance to any dwelling without the consent of the individual living there. And what else can explain the fact that Harker fails to see Dracula's image in the mirror into which he, Harker, is looking when Dracula is standing right behind him? Van Helsing lets this crucial cat out of the bag when he underlines the terrible consequences of failing to kill Dracula: "But to fail, is not mere life or death. It is that we become as him; that we henceforward become foul things of the night like him – without heart or conscience, preying on the bodies and the souls of those we love best."<sup>129</sup> The idea that Dracula has to be "invited in" implicitly puts the blame on the vampire victim, and this is certainly implied in the case of Lucy Westenra, Dracula's first English victim, by her sleepwalking. The implication here is that Lucy has invited Dracula in even if she has to go out to find him. She has allowed herself to be seduced and once seduced, she becomes wanton, voluptuous, and mortally dangerous to her future husband.

Lucy starts out as the ideal Victorian "Angel in the House," but the hint of voluptuousness (a word Stoker uses when describing her) in her nature marks her as potentially dangerous, which, indeed, she proves to be. Once seduced by Count Dracula, Lucy joins the sisterhood of female vampires the reader previously met in Count Dracula's Transylvanian castle. These women embody the voracious female, whose insatiable sexual appetite destroys men by draining their vital juices and infecting and emasculating them with their toothy "tool."<sup>130</sup> When imprisoned in Dracula's castle, Harker is almost raped by these female vampires. Like Egeus, Harker is obsessed by their teeth, which are brilliantly white, pointed, and sharp. His description betrays his intense desire to be penetrated by them:

All three had brilliant white teeth, that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear, I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips.

Harker further elaborates his conflicted feelings: "I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the supersensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of the

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<sup>129</sup> Stoker, *Dracula* (see note 125), 209. See Carol A. Senf, "Dracula: The Unseen Face in the Mirror," *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 9 (1979): 160–70.

<sup>130</sup> The connection between women, sex, and syphilis is clearly in the background here. Whether Stoker died of tertiary syphilis or overwork is a matter of dispute.

two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in languorous ecstasy and waited – waited with a beating heart.”<sup>131</sup>

The vampire mouth is a central and recurring image in *Dracula*. One character refers to Dracula’s “white sharp teeth, behind the full lips of the blood-dripping mouth, champed together like those of a wild beast.”<sup>132</sup> The vampire mouth is both penetrative and receptive; it is both red and white, symbolizing blood and semen. It consequently blurs the gender distinctions so central to Victorian ideology. Harker’s passivity in the face of the aggressive sexuality of the Count’s female vampires completely undermines the patriarchal values preached at the time. It becomes the role of Professor Van Helsing to protect these values and return Lucy and later Mina to their prescribed role as “God’s women,” to use Helsing’s phrase. He employs every phallic weapon in his arsenal – the hyperdermic needle, stake, and surgeon’s knife – to make sure that women keep to their divinely-ordained role as the ones who are penetrated and resist the siren call of the “New Woman,” anathematized at the time and by Mina herself in the novel.<sup>133</sup> While Mina is eventually cured, Lucy is too far gone. She has become a vampire and consequently must die. This death, really murder, prescribed for her by Van Helsing, illustrates the fear and loathing inspired by overtly sexual women. Lucy’s death is all the more horrific because her fiancé Arthur is the one who drives the stake through her heart, and he does this with unalloyed cruelty and a complete lack of remorse:

The Thing in the coffin writhed: and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-gearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted around it. His face was set, and high duty seems to shine through it; the sight of it gave us courage, so that our voices seemed to ring through the little vault.

And then the writing and quivering of the body became less, and the teeth ceased to champ, and the face quiver. Finally it lay still. The terrible task was over.<sup>134</sup>

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**131** Stroker, *Dracula* (see note 125), 42–43.

**132** Stroker, *Dracula* (see note 125), 247.

**133** Christopher Craft, “‘Kiss Me with Those Red Lips’: Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*,” *Representations* 8 (Fall 1984), 107–33. Cf. Stephanie Demetrakopoulis, “Feminism, Sex Role Exchanges, and Other Subliminal Fantasies in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*,” *Frontiers* 2.3 (Autumn 1977): 104–13.

**134** Stoker, *Dracula* (see note 125), 192.

Lucy dies in the throes of what can only be described as a violent orgasm, having been for all purposes brutally raped by her fiancé. Once Lucy's spasms subside with her death, "the foul Thing that we had so dreaded and grown to hate" vanished, and Lucy's face returned to its "unequalled sweetness and purity."<sup>135</sup> At this point, "There was," to quote the text, "gladness and mirth and peace everywhere." Quite an ending for such a savage scene.<sup>136</sup>

As we have seen, the epidemic of ennui that affected increasing numbers of disillusioned male artists and writers was the consequence of many aspects of the social, economic, and cultural changes brought about by the breakdown of traditional society under the impact of the Reformation, The Scientific Revolution, urbanization, industrialization, and European imperialism. As de Musset claimed, his generation was caught between the old and the new. Unlike most of their contemporaries they were incapable of jumping on the bandwagon of modernity because they despised the radical changes it brought with it. In this respect, the primary factor that makes boredom modern is the same one responsible for the allure it had for many people, the idea of unstoppable progress.

As I argued in an earlier essay, most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientists and a good number of intellectuals did not suffer from ennui. They were not disenchanted with modernity but enchanted by it, and they passed this enchantment on to many people by revealing the endless possibilities offered by scientific and technological progress.<sup>137</sup> To give just one example, in a letter to her father written after viewing the Great Exhibition of 1851, Charlotte Brontë describes the "magic" of the things she had seen and the astonishment they provoked:

... none but super-human hands could have arranged it thus, with such a blaze and contrast of colours and marvelous power of effect. The multitude filling the great aisles seems ruled and subdued by some invisible influence. Amongst the thirty thousand souls that peopled it the day I was there not one loud noise was to be heard, not one irregular movement seen; the living tide rolls on quietly, with a deep hum like the sea heard from the distance.<sup>138</sup>

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**135** Stoker, *Dracula* see note 125), 192.

**136** Stoker, *Dracula* see note 125), 193.

**137** Allison P. Coudert, "Rethinking Max Weber's Theory of Disenchantment," *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time: The Occult in Pre-Modern Sciences, Medicine, Literature, Religion, and Astrology*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 20 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 705–737.

**138** Cited in Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 27. It must be said that the Crystal Palace provoked explosive public controversy with most of the cultural establishment, and this included John

From Brontë's description, it seems that wonder was the order of the day and not just at the Great Exhibition. New inventions greatly enlarged the boundaries of what was possible, even plausible, and increasingly obscured the dividing line between the material and the spiritual as mechanical innovations produced signs of life and spirit.<sup>139</sup> But the very novelty that entranced Brontë came at a price, and that price was the downside of the idea of progress, a downside that fueled the epidemic of ennui.

The modern emphasis on progress defers expectations to the future, making it virtually impossible to appreciate the moment. The very enchantment occasioned by all the new technological inventions that transformed life in so many positive ways continually bombarded individuals with new stimuli; but as these became familiar, they grew boring. New ones had to be constantly substituted. As a result, the desire for stimulation became unending and impossible to satisfy. This was a point Walter Benjamin stressed in his unfinished work on the sociocultural dimensions of modernity, *Das Passagen Werk (Arcades Project)*.<sup>140</sup> As he wrote, boredom arises "when we don't know what we are waiting for."<sup>141</sup> Benjamin claims that in a world dominated by modernity there cannot be an idea of antiquity but only of obsolescence as long-term experience (*Erfahrung*) is eclipsed by short-term experience (*Erlebnis*).<sup>142</sup> As Elizabeth Goodstein puts it, "... a process of continuously accelerating transformation" creates "both the disaffection with the old that drives the search for change and ... the malaise produced by living under a permanent speed-up."<sup>143</sup> Baudelaire takes this observation a step further and wonders if the obsession with progress is not itself a form of suicide:

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Ruskin, condemning it. But the common people and foreigners loved it. Jan Piggott, *Palace of the People* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

**139** Winter, *Mesmerized* (see note 138), 38.

**140** Benjamin first mentioned this work in a letter to his friend Gershom Scholem in 1927. He worked on it until his death in 1940. It was first published in German in 1982 and edited and translated into English and published by Harvard University Press in 1999.

**141** Cited in Goodstein, *Experience Without Qualities* (see note 4), 35.

**142** Cited in Goodstein, *Experience Without Qualities* (note 4), 9–10.

**143** Goodstein, *Experience Without Qualities* (note 4), 1. It is worth noting that Goethe anticipated exactly this in the second part of *Faust*, which most people never read, where he shows the tragic dimensions of Faust's successful plan to modernize his community. Once modernization begins, it can never stop; what is new today must be replaced tomorrow. This is the basis of Faust's bargain with Mephistopheles: if he ever admits to being satisfied, he will be damned. For an insightful discussion of Faust as the prototype of the modern developer, see Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* (see note 82), 60–86.

I leave aside the question of whether, by continually refining humanity in proportion to the new enjoyment it offers, indefinite progress might not be its most cruel and ingenious torture; whether, proceeding as it does by a negation of itself, it would not turn out to be a perpetually renewed form of suicide, and whether, shut up in the fiery circle of divine logic, it would not be like the scorpion that stings itself with its own tail – progress, that eternal desideratum that is its own eternal despair!<sup>144</sup>

Progress was, indeed, a form of suicide, at least for those things and people deemed obsolete. In addition, the growth of individualism and the romantic idea of self-realization exacerbated the desire for personal meaning at the expense of the traditional community ties and structure. The romantic imagination consequently came up hard against the exigencies of daily life, which it excoriated as limiting, constricting, in a word, boring. The paradox was that this boredom actually represented the emptiness felt by individuals precisely because of the lack of the communal life and traditions they deplored.<sup>145</sup>

Simmel draws a contrast between traditional rural life and urban-industrialized life in a way that helps to explain this seeming paradox. He argues that in “all higher culture” the processes for fulfilling human needs are lengthened and increasingly differentiated as they are not in rural existence. For example, just getting a loaf of bread on the table in urban settings involves a high level of social organization and a long chain of social interactions that are not necessary in rural settings. In the modern world, “Life,” as he says, “is made into a technical problem.”

The technology [Technik], i.e. the sum of means for a cultivated existence, becomes the actual content of one’s efforts and valuations until one is surrounded on all sides by ranks of undertakings and institutions intertwined in every direction but for which everywhere the definitive, valuable goals are lacking. It is only in this state of culture that the need of a final purpose for life arises at all. So long as life is filled by short series of goals, each satisfying in itself, that searching restlessness which must arise from reflection about being trapped in a network of mere means, detours, preliminaries, remains distant. Not until we understand countless activities and interests on which we concentrated as if on ultimate goals in their character as mere means does the anxious question about the meaning and purpose of the whole arise.<sup>146</sup>

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**144** Baudelaire, “Salon of 1859.” Cited in Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air* (note 82), 142.

**145** Barbara Dalle Pezze and Carlo Salzani, ed., *Essays on Boredom and Identity*. Critical Studies, 31 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009), 13–14. Many Romantics realized this and longed to create utopian communities in which individuals would be reconnected in a holistic way. This also accounts for the reemergence of vitalistic, holistic theories of nature espoused by many Romantics. These Romantics did not suffer from ennui themselves; but they recognized the malady and wanted to cure it.

**146** Cited in Goodstein, *Experience Without Qualities* (see note 4), 259.



In short, in urban life the means become the ends, and they are not in themselves satisfying. This is what happened to Ivan Ilyich in Tolstoy's short story. He becomes so caught up in the minutia of daily urban living – how he should furnish his house, what he should wear, what he should serve his guests, how his wife and children (and he) should behave to enhance their middle class status – that he completely loses sight of the larger picture of what life could be and mean.

With the scientific and technological progress that was such a feature of modernity came wholly new realities concerning time. Simmel asks us to imagine what would have happened in nineteenth-century Berlin had all the pocket-watches ceased to function correctly. While rural communities could carry on without timepieces, urban centers would come to a grinding halt:

The relationships and concerns of the typical metropolitan resident are so manifold and complex that, especially as a result of the agglomeration of so many persons with such differentiated interests, their relationships and activities intertwine with one another into a many-membered organism. In view of this fact, the lack of the most exact punctuality in promises and performances would cause the whole to break down into an inextricable chaos. If all the watches in Berlin suddenly went wrong in different ways even only as much as an hour, its entire economic and commercial life would be derailed for some time.<sup>147</sup>

In this modern metropolitan scenario there was a new economy of time. Time had to be useful, productive, and profitable. This was the new bourgeois ethos described by Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and The Rise of Capitalism* (1905) and despised by those suffering from ennui. These artistic rebels loathed anything that smacked of utilitarianism; they harked back to the ancient aristocratic ideal enshrined in the works of Plato and Aristotle that viewed productive work as dull, monotonous, and an impediment to the creative and moral development of superior individuals.<sup>148</sup>

In the modern industrial world time became detached from earlier teleological schemes that viewed it as moving toward predictable ends, be they religious, communal, or personal. As Sylviane Agacinski points out in *Time Passing: Modernity and Nostalgia*, the passing of time “is no longer a moment in a continuous history directed toward an end ... but a one-way passage to which one blindly commits oneself. ... Thus history advances without a final

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**147** Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (see note 80), 328.

**148** This was the conclusion reached by Thorsten Veblen in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), when describing the decidedly non-industrious tastes and privileges of the upper classes. For them honorable work was male and involved hunting, sports, rulership, and the priesthood. Opposed to this was the dishonorable work associated with women and lower classes, who clothed and fed aristocratic males.

destination.”<sup>149</sup> In this respect “... modernity has broken with the eternal.” She cites the Angels’ speech in the second part of Goethe’s *Faust*, “Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis” (All the ephemeral is only an allegory) to press home the point that transient beings cannot find meaning here and in themselves but only in some eternal platonic or heavenly realm.<sup>150</sup> We have, she contends, lost the feeling of nostalgia for a true home to which we can at some point return. Helmut Rosa describes the lost of a teleological view of time in a somewhat different, but no less interesting, way as the “shrinking of the present.” Because change is so rapid and constant our expectations based on past experience are less and less able to match future expectations, making social relationships and our relation with our environment increasingly problematic. Capitalism, with its constant cycle of development, obsolescence, and redevelopment, leaves individuals with virtually no time to live in and enjoy the moment.<sup>151</sup>

Baudelaire was among the many sufferers of ennui obsessed by time. He saw time as a brutal, tyrannical ruler who jolts him out of his enchanting, opium-induced reveries to once again face the squalor and horror of daily life. In “The Double Room” from *Paris Spleen* he describes his disgust at this rude awakening:

But a knock falls on the door, an awful, a resounding knock, and I feel, as in my dreams of hell, a pitchfork being stuck into my stomach. ...

Oh! Yes! Time has reappeared; Time is sovereign ruler now, and with that hideous old man the entire retinue of Memories, Regrets, Spasms, Fears, Agonies, Nightmares, Nerves, and Rages have returned.

I can assure you that the seconds are now strongly accented, and rush out of the clock crying: ‘I am Life, unbearable and implacable Life!’ ...

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**149** Sylviane Agacinski, *Time Passing: Modernity and Nostalgia*, trans. Jody Gladding (2000; New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 11–12.

**150** Agacinski, *Time Passing* (see note 140), 12.

**151** Helmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, trans. Jonathan Trjoo-Mathys. *New Directions in Critical Theory*, 32.1 (New York: Columbia University, 2015). This point is also made by Berman in *All That is Solid Melts in Air* (See note 82). But it is Karl Marx who must get the credit for this, as we can see from a passage in his *Communist Manifesto*: “Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation, distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.” Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, with an introduction by Garth Stedman Jones (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 223.

Yes, Time reigns; he has resumed his brutal tyranny. And he pokes me with his double goad as if I were an ox. 'Then hoi, donkey! Sweat, slave! Man, be damned and live!'<sup>152</sup>

As an artist, Baudelaire was fearful that the rapid changes in taste driven by the commercial market could easily make his work outmoded. In "The Old Woman's Despair," he describes the fate of an old woman who is no long "pleasing." One can't help but think he is referring to himself when his artist work no longer pleases.<sup>153</sup> This fear of not pleasing comes out even more clearly in "The Old Clown," in which Baudelaire sees himself in the "pitiful old clown, bent, decrepit, the ruin of a man." The old clown is "the prototype of the old writer who has been the brilliant entertainer of the generation he has outlived" and of "the old poet without friends, without family, without children, degraded by poverty and the ingratitude of the public ... to whose booth the fickle world no longer cares to come!"<sup>154</sup>

In *Modernity and its Discontents* César Graña picks up and expands on themes articulated by Benjamin in his *Arcades Project* to help us further understand the epidemic of the ennui infecting modern artists. Graña claims that the modern man of letters became "a social problem" as notions about the role of the artist in society changed and traditional forms of patronage gave way to a commercially-driven mass market. Before the industrial age, artists and intellectuals had been patronized by the aristocracy, and they, in turn, lent their support to aristocratic ideals emphasizing heredity and honor, and the taste, refinement, and elegance that came with leisure. With the decline of the aristocracy and rise of the bourgeoisie, new ideals were needed, but the bourgeoisie failed to promote and represent a type of life commanding universal respect and admiration. The artist was now thrown into a world that for the most part valued rational calculation, hard work, a pragmatic approach to problems, and material well-being, all anathemas to the literati, who castigated the bourgeoisie for their disrespect for the arts, spiritual paltriness, cowardice of imagination, crass materialism, and the slavish concern for propriety.<sup>155</sup>

The self-esteem of artists, which ballooned with Romanticism, was cruelly deflated by the realities of this new mass market. While Jacques Barzun has shown how difficult it is to define Romanticism, there are consistent themes, one

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152 Charles Baudelaire, "The Double Room," *Paris Spleen* (see note 93), 6–7.

153 Baudelaire, "The Old Woman's Despair," *Paris Spleen* (see note 93), 2.

154 Baudelaire, "The Old Clown," *Paris Spleen* (see note 93), 26–27. That "pleasing" is the best gift one can receive is the theme of "The Fairies' Gifts" as well (*Paris Spleen* [see note 100], 37–39).

155 Graña, *Modernity and its Discontents* (see note 21), 61–65.

of which is the idea of the artist as a genius, a kind of demi-god who bears the highest values of civilization and consequently deserves the greatest respect.<sup>156</sup> This “cosmic self-assertion,” as Graña describes it, came face-to-face with the reality of market-driven forces that did not necessarily, or even usually, respect artistic geniuses.<sup>157</sup> This led to an artistic split personality: “Arrogance and almost utopian self-confidence on the one hand; fear, impotence and martyrdom on the other.”<sup>158</sup> The new disjunction between artists and the public at large was what created the idea of the Bohemian life, which “embodies as a social fixture the burning and doomed enthusiasm for the life of the spirit, the daily battle against the powers of the modern world.”<sup>159</sup>

The Bohemian imagination revered the outlaw and was filled with noble bandits, pirates, robbers, and disaffected noblemen gone rogue, all of whom were aristocratic, magnificent, and threatening – in other words, antagonistic to the new bourgeois order. Mrs. Trollope was aghast that the drama of the 1830s was infatuated with vice, poison, rape, murder, and blasphemy. As we have seen, de Musset deplored the fact that “writings cadaverous and foul which had no form other than the face of anarchy began to bathe all that is monstrous in nature in fetid blood.”<sup>160</sup> The English novelist William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863) drew up a list of the paintings he saw at an exhibition in 1830. The titles speak for themselves: “The Massacre at Scio,” “Medea Going to Murder her Children,” “Hecuba Going to Be Sacrificed,” “The Grand Dauphiness Dying,” “Zenobia Found Dead,” “The Death of Caesar,” “The Death of Hector,” “The Massacre of St. Bartholomew,” “Young Clovis Found Dead.”<sup>161</sup>

The list goes on and attests to the fixation of alienated artists on death. In *Le Romantisme et les mœurs* (1910) Louis Maigron collected notes written by aspiring artists, one of which reads: “Heroes die smiling in the flames, and like them, I go smiling to the funeral pyre. Divine Art, I carry you in my souls. Let me be worthy of you.”<sup>162</sup> The Bohemians wrote books with bathetic titles

**156** Jacques Barzun, *Classic, Romantic, and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Graña, *Modernity and its Discontents* (see note 21), 66–68.

**157** As Marx points out in *The Communist Manifesto*, artists were not alone in this. All intellectuals were turned into “paid-wage labourers.” Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (see note 151), 222.

**158** Graña, *Modernity and its Discontents* (see note 21), 55.

**159** Graña, *Modernity and its Discontents* (see note 21), 72. See also Vic Gatrell, *The First Bohemians: Life and Art in London's Golden Age* (London: Allen Lane, 2013).

**160** De Musset, *Confession* (see note 67), 15–16.

**161** Graña, *Modernity and its Discontents* (see note 21), 76.

**162** Cited in Graña, *Modernity and its Discontents* (see note 21), 79.

such as *Nécropolis*, *Philosophie du désespoir*, *Entre la vie et la mort*, *Mémoires d'un suicide*, *L'Amour de la mort*. The French writer and photographer Maxime Du Camp (1822–1894) claimed that “Never was death more loved than then.”<sup>163</sup> In 1846 The Suicide Club (originally The Fed-up Club) was established at the Sorbonne. Its members were between eighteen and thirty. It prohibited suicide for love or medical and financial reasons as well as any suicide method that would lead to disfiguration. Only beautiful suicides for artistic reasons were sanctioned. The poet Théophile Dondey imagined his suicide in an opera box: “I would sit alone in a quiet box, and when the violins, the oboes, and the musical throats rise like sonorous arches before the admiring heart, I shall swallow a handful of some bliss-bringing opiate ... as the chaste-sensuous music pours out its homage to my beautiful death.”<sup>164</sup> All this was largely posturing, although there were sensational cases of artists who did commit suicide.

It is no coincidence, then, that Émile Durkheim published *Le Suicide* (1897) at the end of a century so preoccupied with death. He was certainly correct in thinking that suicide was a social and not an individual act: “... the educated man who kills himself, does not kill himself because he is educated but because the religious society of which he is a part has lost its cohesion. To live a fully human life requires some kind of belonging.”<sup>165</sup> Durkheim developed a theoretical typology of suicide that helps us to understand the fixation on death by those suffering from ennui: “Anomic suicide” caused by the extreme changes in everyday life and a consequent sense of not belonging; “altruistic suicide” committed for a cause; “egoistic suicide” resulting from a loss of ties to family, friends, and society at large; and, finally, “fatalistic suicide” caused by conditions of extreme social regulation and oppression. These four types of suicide were all applicable to those disaffected intellectuals who actually or imaginatively took this route to escape their ennui.

As we can see, there was no simple or clear cure for those suffering from the unnerving effects of ennui. These individuals were left stranded and isolated in a world that had lost its cohesion and fragmented into meaningless bits. During the early modern period the idea that humans were intimately connected to the larger universe and to each other was shattered and replaced by the image of individuals

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<sup>163</sup> Cited in Graña, *Modernity and its Discontents* (see note 21), 79.

<sup>164</sup> Cited in Graña, *Modernity and its Discontents* (see note 21), 79.

<sup>165</sup> Émile Durkheim: *Sociologist of Modernity*, ed. Mustafa Emirbayer. Ira J. Cohen, ed., *Modernity and Society* (Oxford and Melbourne: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2003), 39.

as separate “monads” locked in their own solipsistic worlds.<sup>166</sup> The sense of isolation that followed from this was a major cause of the ennui that reached epic proportions in the following centuries. Ennui was and remains the quintessential disease of modernity. While the belief in progress may have dimmed, the pace of life has not. It moves with ever-greater speed to the point that obsolescence now takes a matter of months, even weeks, not years. The one thing that has changed, however, is the way ennui is regarded. Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century it lost its heroic existential and metaphysical dimensions as it was slowly reduced to a psychological condition that could be treated with anti-depressants or, better still, with new gadgets and technologies to engage our attention and interest. As President George W. Bush put it, the solution for anyone anxious about the modern world is to go shopping. And when that doesn’t work, there is Facebook, texting, Instagram, computer games, robotic companions from pets to sexual partners, and opioids. We can already opt out of what has become known as “real” life (shortened to rl) and create an avatar who is smarter, richer, and better looking than we are and enter into the many virtual worlds offered on the internet. Who knows what will appear next on the horizon to ameliorate our very modern malady.<sup>167</sup>

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**166** Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (1936; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Allison P. Coudert, *Religion, Magic, and Science in Early Modern Europe and America* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), ch. 1, “All Cohesion Gone.”

**167** Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011). Turkle investigates the psychological damage that can occur when individuals enter into personal relationships with robots. Her research was brilliantly anticipated by E. T. A Hoffmann in his compelling short story “The Sandman,” in which the protagonist Nathaneal falls in love with Olympia, an automaton, and goes mad. Many of the themes discussed in this essay in connection with ennui are characteristic of Nathaneal: his idealism; his antagonism toward bourgeois culture; his mental disintegration; and his inherent misogyny and fear of castrating women. The latter is discussed in Freud’s 1919 essay “The Uncanny,” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1917–1919), 218–153.

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